

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



**Department of Corrections**

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The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
House Committee on Judiciary  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

March 24, 2026

**Re: H8272 – Relating to Criminal Offenses -- Custodial Law Enforcement Sexual Penetration**

Dear Chairperson McEntee:

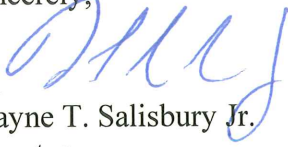
This evening the House Committee on Judiciary will consider House Bill #8272. This bill would prohibit members of law enforcement from engaging in sexual penetration with individuals in their custody. The act would also provide that a person convicted of custodial law enforcement sexual penetration would face imprisonment for not more than three (3) years. The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) is concerned that this legislation may inadvertently contradict an existing statute with stronger provisions for punishment meant to deter such unacceptable behavior.

Rhode Island General Law § 11-25-24 states: *“Every employee of the department of corrections or the employee of a contractor who is under contract to provide services in a correctional institution who engages in sexual penetration as defined in § 11-37-1 with an inmate confined in a correction institution or who is otherwise under the direct custodial supervision and control of that employee shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or both.”* The passage of Senate Bill #299 may create confusion as to the maximum allowable punishment for such heinous actions as there is a two-year variance between it and the existing law governing custodial sexual assault in a correctional setting.

The RIDOC has zero tolerance of inmate sexual abuse and sexual harassment and accepts all reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment whether made verbally, in writing, anonymously or from third parties. There is no time limit on when an incident of sexual abuse or sexual harassment can be reported. Every allegation of inmate sexual abuse and sexual harassment is thoroughly investigated by the RIDOC Office of Inspections, the RIDOC Special Investigations Unit, and/or the Rhode Island State Police. Where warranted by evidence, proportional sanctions up to and including criminal prosecution are implemented. All staff are accountable, particularly in matters related to potential sexual assault.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Salisbury Jr.", written over the printed name.

Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.  
Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
The Honorable Raymond A. Hull  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House