



RHODE ISLAND BROTHERHOOD OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

"Representing Those Who Work the Toughest Beat in the State"

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April 2, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding H 7216, the resolution creating a special legislative commission to study and provide recommendations regarding healthcare delivery within the Rhode Island Department of Corrections.

Let me be clear at the outset: improving the delivery of healthcare services within RIDOC is an important goal, and no one disputes the need for adequate medical, mental health, and substance use treatment services.

However, as currently drafted, the proposed commission is structurally unbalanced and excludes critical operational voices.

The commission includes two guaranteed seats for representatives of an inmates' rights group, yet provides no required representation for frontline correctional staff, correctional healthcare professionals, or public safety personnel who respond daily to medical and behavioral health crises inside the institutions.

This is a serious concern.

Healthcare delivery in a correctional setting cannot be viewed in isolation from security operations, emergency response, suicide prevention, detox monitoring, hospital transport, and behavioral crisis management. Correctional officers and frontline staff are directly involved in every one of these situations.

Our members are the first to respond to medical emergencies, mental health episodes, overdoses, suicide attempts, and hospital transports. They are responsible for maintaining safety for medical staff, other inmates, and the public during these events.

It is difficult to understand how a commission charged with evaluating healthcare delivery can exclude those who manage these operational realities every day.

The current makeup risks producing recommendations that may appear clinically sound on paper but are disconnected from the operational and safety realities within the correctional environment.

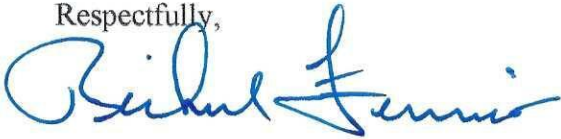
At a minimum, the resolution should be amended to include:

- a representative from frontline correctional staff
- a correctional healthcare professional or nursing representative
- consideration of balancing, rather than duplicating, advocacy seats

A balanced commission will lead to better recommendations and greater public confidence.

Absent those changes, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose H 7216 in its current form.

Respectfully,



Richard Ferruccio

President

Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers