

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Charles B. Ortman <cbortman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2026 12:12 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Support for H8328 and H8347

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Dear Members, please support and pass through to the floor H8328:

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- This bill does not change the court's ability to accept or deny a request for a hearing, but it allows
  - individuals to request a remote hearing.
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- This bill will allow for a stated reason to be given when someone is denied a remote hearing, and for
  - that reason to be recorded. The Office of Access to Justice has not clearly stated this.
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- It allows these remote hearings to carry the same legal ground as in-person hearings. This also means
  - that they can not be discriminated against for appearing remotely.
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- The client has access to all constitutional rights that protect their access to justice, including translation
  - services and/or services for individuals who are disabled, hard of hearing, or have other similar needs.

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- Virtual Hearings allow for access to justice for all of Rhode Island's communities. Whether it be for
  - accessibility barriers, emergency medical instances, need for daycare, and/or fear of ICE agents detaining them.
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- What is occurring right now is that people are making decisions during their court hearings because
  - they are not showing up. For some, this is actually safer because of ICE. This is not justice.
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And H8347:

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- Strengthens public safety
  - by building trust so immigrant communities feel safe reporting crimes and cooperating with police.
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- Protects constitutional rights
  - by requiring judicial warrants and preventing unlawful detention based on civil immigration requests.
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- Keeps local resources local
  - by ensuring state and municipal funds are not used for federal immigration enforcement.
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- Clarifies that immigration status is not a crime,
- helping prevent racial profiling and wrongful targeting.
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- Maintains focus on real criminal activity
- by allowing cooperation with federal authorities on criminal—not civil—matters.
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- Promotes fairness and stability
- by reducing fear, protecting families, and supporting more inclusive communities.
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Thank you for your service to our wonderful Ocean State!

A blessing on your head, Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov!

Charlie Ortman

Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman

Vice President Rhode Island State Council of Churches

Commissioner on Immigration, RISCC

Minister Emeritus, Unitarian Universalist Cong. at Montclair, NJ

"We are given life to find its meaning." --Eleanore Gordon