

TO: House Judiciary Committee
SUBJECT: SUPPORT for H-8347 and H-8328

Dear House Judiciary Members,

My name is Merrill Schmidt, and I live in Cranston. I am writing in support of H-8347- Non-Collaboration with Federal Immigration Enforcement and H-8328- Virtual Hearings. Bill H-8347 would prohibit state or local authorities from voluntary participation in federal civil immigration enforcement while bill H-8328 would allow all RI courts to conduct virtual hearings and establish a right to remote hearings.

These bills are practical measures to reduce the harm that immigrant communities are facing due President Trump's cruel immigration policies. I believe that the illegal, murderous actions taken by ICE and other federal immigration enforcement agencies are completely unacceptable from a moral/ethical standpoint. With the deployment of ICE in our communities, I am deeply concerned about the well-being of my immigrant friends and neighbors. After seeing the murders of American citizens at the hands of ICE officers, I am also concerned about the safety of my own family and other community members who are standing up against the human rights abuses and illegal actions of the Trump administration. I think that the State of Rhode Island should do everything in its power to avoid participation in these abuses, and H-8347 offers one step towards this objective.

With regards to the H-8328, I believe that community members should not face the threat of detention and deportation simply for showing up for a mandatory hearing. I believe that offering virtual hearings throughout the state would help address this issue and keep our neighbors safer when interacting with the justice system. I hope that our state can publicly recognize the immense value of our immigrant communities and make every effort to protect immigrants, as we continue to face the harms unleashed by the Trump administration.

I urge you to support bills H-8347 and H-8328 this session. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Merrill Schmidt
Cranston, RI