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From: Reed, Joshua <joshua_reed@brown.edu>
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To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Written Testimony for Judiciary Committee for HB8328

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Dear legislators,

I am writing and testifying in demand of virtual court hearings to prevent the kidnapping of Rhode Island community members in our courthouses by ICE. I have not had any personal encounters with ICE, CBP, or any other part of the overstepping DHS while living in Rhode Island, but I am a university student who knows many international students at my school living each day of their lives in fear of unjust kidnapping. I know many others, from home and here in RI, who have taken precautions they never thought they'd have to take as a result of ICE presence in our streets and, more precisely, our courthouses.

The problem is unbelievably clear—the solution, perhaps, even more so. I am aware of the history of virtual court hearings in RI: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the option of virtual court was available to all. Now, family court sessions are frequently held virtually, and the city of Providence has already extended the option of virtual court to its citizens for city court hearings. The infrastructure is present, up-to-date, and easy to reimplement. In other words, there is absolutely no reason not to consider HB8328 and allow virtual court hearings for all, just as you have done before.

I see this as a major problem that is easily fixable with an already popular solution. In RI, there is a sense of community and a desire to protect our neighbors. As our legislators, I would hope you feel this desire, too.

Thank you,
Joshua Reed