

Roberta DiMezza

From: Kristen Lancaster <klancaster1112@gmail.com>
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Dear Chairwoman McEntee,

My name is Kristen Lancaster, I am a co-founder of the Lil' Rhody Visibility Brigade and a resident of Cranston. I am writing to express my strong support of HB8328 to expand virtual court hearings.

I am in support of HB8328 because the Trump Administration has militarized ICE agents against communities for one reason and one reason alone, to normalize it and continue its use. ICE agents have been moved into airports and the Trump Administration has signaled they will send them into states during the 2026 election cycle. Like you all, I have been trained to recognize fascism and what the rise of authoritarianism looks like. As an Army Veteran, a former employee of the United States Attorney's Office, and a recently retired employee of the Social Security Administration, I have a first hand account of watching it happen while I worked during the first term and again over the course of 2025.

As I mentioned during my testimony during the hearing for S3143, The Trump Administration has purposefully been attacking our federal agencies from the inside out by creating barriers for employees to complete their mission in serving the public, as well as, introducing untested and unvetted AI into them. Policies are also being updated through Executive Order bypassing Congress. The Trump Administration is working towards authoritarianism rather than working within the democratic institution on which the Constitution was created. We should all be very alarmed by the ongoing actions within our federal systems. It is why I retired 6 years early from federal service to become a full-time activist. We need to protect Rhode Islanders from this blatant threat on our rights. The passage of HB8328 would be one of those actions that you all can take to do just that!

The first time I took the Oath to serve and stated that I would protect these lands from "all enemies, foreign and domestic" I meant it. I took that Oath again two additional times with the Army and 2 more times when I entered federal service. I meant it each and every time. I am a protector of humanity, not any one person. It is what we should all be protecting during a time that we see a dictator that has taken over our federal government and uses servicemembers and federal agents as his toys. I am resolute today that although I am retired from civil service, I will continue to serve that Oath.

I know you all also take an Oath to protect the people and I hope that you all pass HB8328 in order to fulfill that Oath to protect the people of Rhode Island.

In Gratitude,

Kristen Lancaster
Cranston, RI