

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Mayan and I am writing today in support of HB8328.

As a resident of Rhode Island, I want ICE out of our communities! ICE has a proven record of terrorizing our schools, tearing families apart, and murdering community members. Their actions are always violent: On Saturday, April 4th, for the third time in Rhode Island, ICE agents caused a traffic accident—crashing into a community member's car and smashing his window to take him.

I demand an end to ICE kidnapping people outside the courthouse. We have seen ICE lying in wait and preying on people who are just attending their court date. We've even seen domestic violence victims getting kidnapped from court by ICE.

On Tuesday of this week, ICE came to the Cranston Municipal Courthouse to try to kidnap a community member. Two weeks ago, they came to the Garrahy courthouse 4 times in one week. We have seen ICE enter the courthouse chasing after people and injuring them, kidnapping teenage court interns, and kidnapping people right outside their homes while they're on the way to court. Courthouses will never be accessible if community members must constantly risk deportation just by leaving their homes. The new form that Chief Justice Suttel introduced is not sufficient—all of these sightings, as well as several kidnappings, have occurred after that form was introduced.

This is an issue of accessibility: how are Rhode Island immigrants expected to pay their parking tickets, sue when their civil rights are violated, or appear for their court appearances?

If Rhode Island really wants to prevent court kidnappings, we can offer virtual court proceedings to all who request them right now. These protections are stronger than what has

previously existed; the best way to keep our immigrant community members safe is if they do not have to go to court in person.

The infrastructure for virtual options already exists: During the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings and procedures were offered online to all Rhode Islanders. Furthermore, Family Court already frequently holds online hearings, and many lawyers have successfully requested virtual options for their clients in other courts. These measures must be made widely accessible to prevent the abductions that are continuing weekly. Last year, the city of Providence passed a law allowing a virtual option for all city courts.

Additionally, Rhode Islanders want virtual court hearings! More than 3,500 people have signed the petition for virtual court hearings. With each passing day, more immigrant members of our community are being kidnapped at court. These are our fathers, mothers, classmates, neighbors, essential workers, taxpayers, and friends.

This hearing is only possible because of the power of the movement for virtual court hearings. It is only possible now, after almost a year of organizing: After several protests attended by thousands of Rhode Islanders, months of documenting case after case of ICE brutality outside of courthouses, and building the Deportation Defense Network, a network of thousands of community members who are demanding ICE leave our communities once and for all. We've learned the hard way: we can't rely on the state government to protect us. While ICE has terrorized our neighborhoods and kidnapped our loved ones, state legislators have stood by, silent and complicit — watching from the sidelines. The people of Rhode Island have been doing the work the Rhode Island Government should be doing. If you are a community member and see ICE in our neighborhoods, or if you want to get involved, text the Defense Line at

401-675-1414! Even this small act can make a profound difference. In Rhode Island, we defend each other!

Virtual courts are just the first step. These brutal, horrific, and very public courthouse kidnappings have been taking place for over a year. The proposed law would be a significant improvement in protecting our state's residents, but it is not enough! The people of Rhode Island demand an end to ICE terror in our entire state, not just at the courthouses. I urge the state of Rhode Island to do everything in its power to stop ICE from terrorizing our neighborhoods, and to make sure that all of our state institutions—not just our courthouses—are not helping ICE destroy our state.

Thank you.