

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Sarah Bowman

Date : April 9, 2026

Re: Support HB 8328

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sarah Bowman, I am a proud Providence resident, mother and public health professional. I am writing in **support of HB 8328** which would permit all Rhode Island courts to conduct hearings remotely and allow any party or attorney to appear by telephone or video conference.

Passing this bill matters because it helps better ensure due process for all Rhode Islanders by making our courts more accessible to those who might be worried that arriving at court in person could put them at risk of being picked up by ICE. Fear of the courthouse may prevent people who have been the victims of crimes to come forward, it may limit the availability of witnesses who have pertinent information, or it may lead to the escalation of charges for people who do not appear when summoned.

Ensuring that perpetrators, victims and witnesses experience as few barriers as possible better ensures that our system is fair and equitable, and in doing so makes Rhode Island safer for everyone. As a mother, I will go home tonight, tell my daughter about the letter I wrote during my lunch break and explain why passing this bill makes RI safer for her. In the coming days and weeks, we will follow along as this hopefully progresses out of committee and onto a vote.

Thank you for considering my testimony and my recommendation to pass HB 8328.

Thank you,

Sarah Bowman, MPH

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