



State of Rhode Island
Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos

April 9, 2026

The Hon. Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
82 Smith Street, House Lounge
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Letter of Support for H8328: An Act Relating To Courts And Civil Procedure -- Courts -- Permitting Virtual Or Remote Court Hearings

Dear Chair McEntee:

I write to you in enthusiastic support of H8328: An Act Relating To Courts And Civil Procedure -- Courts -- Permitting Virtual Or Remote Court Hearings. This bill permits all Rhode Island courts to conduct hearings remotely and allow any party or attorney to appear by telephone or video conference, with remote appearances having the same legal effect as in-person appearances.

Since the start of the Trump Administration, we have seen how predatory, so-called “immigration enforcement” tactics have resulted in breaches in security at courthouses, wrongful identifications of detainees, and general chaos in what should otherwise be a deliberate and intentional process. Judges have even had to step in and intervene, causes further delays and additional legal correspondence. Regardless of political affiliation, every person in this country has the right to due process free from external threat, by a federal agency or otherwise.

This bill allows Rhode Islanders to call or appear virtually in court via video conference. This will not only ensure that Rhode Islanders can actually get their day in court, but it will also make it easier for people to show up and advocate for themselves in a way that accommodates them. This bill preserves the integrity of the legal process while also growing the public’s right of access. For these reasons, I urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

Sabina Matos
Lieutenant Governor, State of Rhode Island
CC: Representative Grace Diaz



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