

Dear Chairperson McEntee and members of the committee:

My name is Day-Quon C Stevens. I am here to express my strong support for H7651, which seeks to create a fairer process for individuals accused of probation violations under Rule 32F.

This bill matters to me because fairness should not depend on circumstances. Too often, people accused of probation violations are not given a real chance to explain themselves. That can lead to life-altering consequences over situations that deserve more understanding and context. For example, I was violated because cuffs were placed on my wrist after a routine traffic stop. I beat the case but was still violated because cuffs were placed on my wrist. I support H7651 because it helps ensure people are treated fairly, heard fully, and given a chance to move forward instead of being pushed backward.

Currently, individuals accused of probation violations can be held in detention for long periods without charges before their hearings, often without a meaningful opportunity to return to their families, jobs, housing, or treatment. This situation can result in the loss of employment, custody of children, and stable housing, even before any violation is proven. This bill would help restore due process, ensuring that detention is not the automatic response to a probation violation.

This proposal is important because it balances public safety with fairness, requiring courts to consider specific factors such as the nature of the violation, the individual's probation history, criminal record, and potential risk to public safety before making decisions about detention or bail. By providing a more individualized approach, the bill recognizes that not every violation warrants automatic detention. People should have the opportunity to remain in the community, especially when they are making efforts to comply with their supervision. Detaining individuals without bail before their case is heard only punishes them prematurely, making it harder for them to succeed. I urge the committee to pass [Bill Number] to ensure that Rhode Island's probation system is fair, effective, and grounded in due process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submit to:

Housejudiciary@rilegislature.gov