

Subject: Testimony in Support of H7651 – Bail on 32

Dear Chairwoman McEntee, Vice Chair Knight, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Melonie Perez, and I am a resident of Cranston, Rhode Island. I am writing in strong support of **H7651, the Bail on 32 bill**.

Rhode Island's probation system is one of the harshest in the country. Despite being the smallest state, Rhode Island has the **second-highest probation rate in the United States**, with rates two times the national average and significantly higher than surrounding states.

Under the current system, people accused of probation violations can be incarcerated while waiting for a hearing, often for weeks. Although the law allows detention for up to 10 days, studies have found that people are **often held for an average of 31 days awaiting their violation hearings**. During this time, individuals frequently lose their jobs, housing, and stability—even when the alleged violation would not normally result in jail time.

These detentions also make up a large portion of incarceration in Rhode Island. According to the Rhode Island Department of Corrections FY 2024 Annual Population Report, **approximately 30% of people entering the ACI are alleged probation violators**. At the same time, incarceration costs taxpayers approximately **\$251 per person per day**. Because probation violators represent such a large share of admissions, unnecessary detention is estimated to cost Rhode Islanders **nearly \$24 million per year**.

H7651 creates a more balanced and fair process. The bill requires courts to **presume release for most probation violations, set reasonable bail or non-monetary conditions, limit detention to cases involving genuine risk or danger, require prompt hearings, and provide written reasons when someone is detained**.

This reform protects due process while ensuring that detention is reserved for situations where it is truly necessary. It would also help reduce unnecessary incarceration, save taxpayer money, and ease the burden on our court system.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **support and pass H7651**..

Thank you for your time and consideration.