

Roberta DiMezza

From: Ali Bouffard <alibouffard4@gmail.com>
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To: Roberta DiMezza; Rep. Cotter, Megan L.
Subject: H8502 testimony

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To the Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of 2026 – H 8502, the “Victim Proximity Protection Act.”

This legislation provides important protections for victims of sexual offenses by establishing enforceable geographic boundaries and automatic no-contact provisions between offenders and victims. For many survivors, the fear and trauma associated with encountering their offender does not end after sentencing. The emotional and psychological impact can continue for years, especially when victims must live, work, or attend school in close proximity to the individual who harmed them.

H 8502 recognizes that victims deserve not only justice in the courtroom, but also meaningful protections that allow them to feel safe in their own communities. The bill creates reasonable exclusion zones while still allowing judicial discretion based on the circumstances of each case. It also appropriately distinguishes higher-risk offenders by imposing stricter proximity restrictions and GPS monitoring requirements for level two and level three offenders during supervised release.

Particularly important is the bill’s automatic no-contact provision. Survivors should not have to repeatedly seek additional court intervention to prevent unwanted communication, intimidation, harassment, or indirect contact from offenders. By clearly prohibiting both direct and indirect contact, this legislation closes dangerous loopholes and provides clearer enforcement standards for law enforcement and the courts.

The victim notification provisions are also critical. Victims deserve timely notice when an offender is released from incarceration and informed of the offender’s approved residence. This information allows victims and families to make informed decisions regarding their own safety and well-being.

This bill carefully balances public safety, victim protection, and judicial oversight. It does not impose blanket community-wide exclusions, and it allows courts to tailor expanded exclusion zones only when supported by written findings related to offense severity, victim vulnerability, and victim impact.

Survivors of sexual violence often carry lifelong emotional consequences from these crimes. Laws such as H 8502 help restore a sense of safety, dignity, and autonomy to victims while reinforcing accountability for offenders during supervised release.

I respectfully urge the committee to support and pass H 8502.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allison Bouffard

Exeter, RI

Sent from my iPhone