

Roberta DiMezza

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To: Roberta DiMezza; Rep. Cotter, Megan L.
Subject: Testimony

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I am writing to raise awareness about a serious gap in Rhode Island law that directly impacts victims of sexual crimes and their families.

I recently became aware of this issue in a deeply personal way after a Level 3 sex offender moved in next door to my family, while one of his victims lives only one street away. What I discovered was alarming: under current Rhode Island law, there are no residency restrictions preventing convicted sex offenders from living near their victims. In some cases, offenders can legally move into the same neighborhood, apartment complex, or even the same building as the individuals they harmed.

This creates an unnecessary and deeply traumatic situation for victims and their families. Survivors of sexual violence should not have to live in fear of unexpectedly encountering the person responsible for their trauma in their own neighborhood or daily lives. The emotional and psychological impact of this proximity can be devastating and can undermine a victim's sense of safety, healing, and stability.

I have been working with State Representative Megan Cotter to advocate for stronger protections for victims through the Victim Proximity Protection Act. This legislation would help establish reasonable safeguards to prevent convicted offenders from residing in dangerously close proximity to their victims.

I urge lawmakers and community members to support this legislation and stand with victims and survivors. Protecting victims from re-traumatization should be a priority, and Rhode Island laws should reflect that commitment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.