

Roberta DiMezza

From: Jordan Goyette <goyettejordan@yahoo.com>
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To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Testimony in favor of H 6637

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To Chairman Craven & members of the Judiciary committee,

I would like to strongly urge you to support Rep. Henries' bill to criminalize custodial sexual assault between Rhode Island's law enforcement officers and their detainees . Currently, Rhode Island stands as just 1 of 10 states that allows this extreme abuse of power and influence to occur. Presently, a peace officer can grossly abuse their power for their own personal gratification. Even if an officer were to say the arrestee "consented, For starters, it isn't possible because they can't consent due to the circumstances, they are detainees of the arresting officers. That alone presents alone a massive power imbalance that cannot possibly be a consensual encounter. Even if yes, the detainee in custody wants to consent, the situation alone presents a power imbalance that inherently fosters coercion. That undue influence cannot be used to abuse some of our most vulnerable neighbors. Letting this go unpunished leaves abusers with badges they can continue to use so they can abuse others. I'd hope anyone would agree it is at least extremely unethical. Sex workers have an untrustworthy perspective of law enforcement as it is due to their unjust criminalization of their profession. Allowing this problem to remain without proper consequences only reinforces that untrustworthy view. They are less likely to report actual violent crimes that happen in their community, even those committed against them. Therefore I would again against that you swiftly bring this bill up for consideration and swift passage.

Thank You,

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