

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



**Department of Corrections**

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The Honorable Evan P. Shanley  
House Committee on State Government and Elections  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

February 7, 2023

**Re: H5127 – An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Corrections Department**

Dear Chairperson Shanley:

This evening the House State Government and Elections Committee will consider House Bill #5127. This bill directs the department of corrections to collect from individuals entering its custody information on: sex, race, nativity (country of origin), religion, and level of education, and publish a summary of such information on an annual basis. The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) supports this legislation which codifies existing practices and enhances our ability to report the geographical origins of the incarcerated population.

The collection of identifiable information from those entering its custody allows the Department to make informed decisions about how to best manage them while incarcerated and prepare them for community reentry. When this legislation was heard last year, a concern was raised about using religion as a data point for “general public policy purposes.” While the RIDOC does collect this information internally to accommodate religious beliefs and activities, it has no preference on including such information in public reporting and will support this legislation with or without the inclusion of that data point.

The Department recognizes the value of publishing the demographics of its incarcerated population and does so each year in its annual report. The addition of nativity (country of origin) to this annual summary will provide government agencies, community organizations and the public an understanding of how our population is composed.

We remain thankful to Representative Diaz for engaging the Department to understand the demographics we collect and determine how to enhance the collection and reporting of such information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.  
Acting Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee  
The Honorable Representatives Diaz, J Lombardi, Slater, Edwards, Vella-Wilkinson, Caldwell,  
Morales, Bennett, Felix

The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) contributes to public safety by maintaining a balanced correctional system of institutional and community programs that provide a range of custodial options, supervision and rehabilitative services in order to facilitate successful offender reentry into the community upon release.