



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Chairperson Representative Shanley
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: 25 House 6188 AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - STATE POLICE

Thursday, April 24, 2025

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-0110) for additional information.

The Commission finds this bill harmful as written.

We appreciate the intent of this bill. At the Governor's Commission on Disabilities, we have a great interest in preserving the independence of people with disabilities and in preventing overly paternalistic policies. We also recognize that people with the most severe disabilities may be vulnerable and need extra support from the community. In some cases, a person's disability makes them especially vulnerable and swift, coordinated action is needed to ensure that the person does not come to severe harm. However, we object to the scope of this bill, specifically the terms that are used to define who is covered under the alert system.

This bill uses the BHDDH definition of developmental disability to define who is covered under the bill, which is overly broad. The definition is used to determine eligibility for services that enable people with disabilities to live independently, not to define people who are cognitively vulnerable. The BHDDH definition includes people who are capable of making their own decisions regarding personal safety and are capable of self-advocacy. If they require assistance, they are no less capable than most other people in seeking it. The broadness of the definition would result in uses of the alert system that were not appropriate, embarrassment for people who are not in danger, and potentially loss of independence for people with disabilities. It would also be a waste of law enforcement resources.

We also object to the exclusion of people with substance use disorder (which is termed "substance abuse disorder in the bill although the language in state statutes was changed in 2023). People may have a concurrent disability, or a past history of substance use disorder and excluding them from this program seems punitive. It is also potentially illegal as substance use disorder is a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act.