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## Bail On 32

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From Bob Walker <bw81882@gmail.com>

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To Senate Judiciary Committee <SenateJudiciary@rilegislature.onmicrosoft.com>

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To whom it may concern,

I am strongly in favor of the Bail on 32 Bill. They say that it's best to speak from experience when testifying on behalf of any legislation, so that is what I am attempting to do.

It is somehow oh so appropriate that I am not in person as the transportation I rely on is the RIPTA bus system! With the possible late night hearing I wouldn't be able to get back to my community should the hearing drag on to the wee hours.—We know that happens!!

So case in point—missing a meeting with your probation officer is often a matter of poverty, or circumstance, Not a matter of willful defiance or maladaptive behavior.

While I haven't myself been on probation, I am a person who has had a serious and persistent mental illness since my teen years. So again, to follow the format, I am speaking from a lived experience. Mental Illnesses are an amazingly democratic engine. They affect every single walk of life. Rich, poor, black, white, asian, it doesn't matter what category you fall into, you have about an equal chance to have a mental illness.

What I have witnessed over the past decades, looking back still brings tears to my eyes when I think back to the absolute crushing of human spirits that incarceration has done to the population that I'd been seemingly assigned—persons with mental illnesses.

In Rhode Island, as too with many other States Mental Illness has been criminalized. Who is the largest provider of services to those with mental illnesses? It is the State's carceral system. I have seen buddies of mine seemingly "killed" by the system. I have seen the light in their eyes extinguished as they lose their humanities in a system that does not even address their humanity firstly, and their psychiatric needs secondly. It just doesn't seem to F-ing care. To be clear Mental Illness is not a crime. It is a treatable condition. Yet there it is, people locked up simply because the State has utterly failed to provide appropriate treatment for treatable conditions in facilities designed for Behavioral Health. You don't know how gut wrenching it has been for me to see these things happen to people I have learned to care about.

And I will backtrack here to the general population. They too deserve a chance to not live behind bars, the bill is not asking for people who are a danger to the public to be "let loose" on society. What is wrong with America that we feel the need to lock people up in such staggering numbers? I mean really??!! No other Country does this!

You all know that the ACI was named the Adult CORRECTIONAL Institute. This bill affords you all the chance to try to hew more to that standard rather than what it seems to be now. The Adult PUNISHMENT Institute.

The correction begins by passage of this bill, Bail On 32.

Thank You for your time,

Bob Walker

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