



State of Rhode Island
Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos

March 10, 2026

Senator Matthew LaMountain
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
82 Smith St, Room 313
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Letter of Support for S2161: An Act Relating To Criminal Procedure -- Sentence And Execution.

Dear Senator LaMountain:

I write to you in support for each S2161: An Act Relating To Criminal Procedure -- Sentence And Execution.

This bill requires courts to presume release for most probation violations, set reasonable bail or non-monetary conditions, limit detention to cases of risk or danger, require prompt hearings, and mandate written reasons for detention. Probation is an alternative to prison that is available as a sentencing option for judges after an adult is adjudicated in a criminal court. The goal is to give an individual the opportunity to pay their debt to society while avoiding time in jail.

Probation requires certain conditions to be satisfied, including but not limited to: notifying a probation officer of any travel out of state in advance, advising the probation officer of any changes of address, etc. Given the size of our state, the frequency with which many of us must travel across the border, and given how volatile the housing market can be (especially for justice-involved individuals), people can violate the terms of their probation over innocent mistakes.

Assuming a presumption of release, and setting reasonable bail or non-monetary conditions, maintains the spirit of what probation is intended to do. Requiring prompt hearings also prevents unnecessary delays and respects every person's constitutional right to a speedy trial.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote this bill out of committee favorably.

Sincerely,

Sabina Matos

Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor