

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** RI Atheists <riatheists@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 5:53 PM  
**To:** Rep. Craven, Robert E.; Rep. McEntee, Carol Hagan; Rep. Knight, Jason; Rep. Ajello, Edith H.; Rep. Batista, Jose F.; Rep. Bennett, David A.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J.; Rep. Dawson, Matthew S.; Rep. Felix, Leonela; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Place, David J.; Rep. Roberts, Sherry; Rep. Cruz, Cherie L.; House Judiciary Committee  
**Cc:** COYOTE RI  
**Subject:** Support H7307

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Representatives,

We join COYOTE RI and our partners in supporting H7307. This bill will allow sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and their customers to report heinous crimes like sex trafficking without fear of arrest. When sex workers and sex trafficking survivors don't have access to equal protections from the justice system because their sex is criminalized, everyone is less safe. Rhode Islanders should feel safe coming forward to report crimes without fear of reprisal by a justice system contaminated by outdated moral codes.

I believe that what consenting adults do in their own private lives is up to them. Sex workers need more recognition and protection - not criminal sanctions. In countries where sex work is illegal, there is a correlation with sex slavery, forced prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases and other societal problems. Supply and demand will always exist, whether they are legal or illegal. And you cannot protect people if they are supplying a service that is illegal.

88% of Rhode Island sex workers report that they have been the victim or witness of a serious crime that they did not report to police. When they did report, 6% said they were arrested, 12% said they were threatened with arrest, 6% said police wouldn't take their report, and only 6% said that police did take their report.

80% of Rhode Island sex workers said they would report serious crimes to police if there were an immunity law in place to protect them.

Any serious attempt to promote public safety or end sex trafficking must include allowing ALL sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and their clients (who are first responders in most cases of sex trafficking) to report violence without being charged with prostitution or massaging without a license. H7307 accomplishes this.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Joseph Burgio  
Director  
Rhode Island Atheists