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TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER (OPD) REGARDING:

House Bill No: 7527

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- GENERAL PROVISIONS

Chairman Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee

The OPD supports H7527, a bill that reclassifies the term misdemeanors in Rhode Island as having a maximum sentence of 364 days in jail. This legislation aligns our state definitions with the federal standard and offers a more just and equitable approach to sentencing for misdemeanor offenses.

H7527 proposes to harmonize Rhode Island's definition of misdemeanors with the federal standard, establishing a consistent framework across jurisdictions. This alignment promotes clarity in legal interpretation and ensures that individuals facing misdemeanor charges are subject to a uniform understanding. Importantly, H7527 will not undermine the consequences that certain misdemeanor convictions have on immigration proceedings but will prevent a person convicted of a misdemeanor from being considered a felon under federal law.

In conclusion, the OPD fully supports H7527 as a positive step toward achieving greater uniformity, fairness, and clarity in our state's legal framework.

Sincerely,



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