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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND**

### **TESTIMONY ON 2024-H 7567, RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE – DOMESTIC ASSAULT April 24, 2024**

This bill provides that “any attorney who self-certifies that they have successfully completed a specialized domestic violence prosecution training course shall have the authority to prosecute any violation of a protective order.” The ACLU has no position on what we presume to be the overall intent of the bill, but we do wish to urge an amendment to clarify an ambiguity in the bill’s wording.

As written, the bill seems to suggest that *any attorney* who completes the required course would be able to prosecute these violations of the law. On its face, it is not limited to state or municipal prosecutors. In light of the potential serious criminal consequences that can flow from a violation of a protective order, it would be very problematic for the state to allow any private attorney with a desire for justice in these types of cases to begin prosecuting such violations.

We understand that is not the intent of this language, and we would therefore urge a clarifying amendment to the bill to prevent that misinterpretation.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.