

## Roberta DiMezza

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**Sent:** Monday, February 10, 2025 3:07 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. Cruz, Cherie L.; Rep. Dawson, Matthew S.; Rep. Felix, Leonela; Rep. Hopkins, Marie A.; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Place, David J.  
**Cc:** House Judiciary Committee; Gavigan, Parker (VETS); kasim yarn  
**Subject:** HB 5222 - Written Testimony from Department of Defense  
**Attachments:** 20250211\_MCFP\_Support\_RI\_HB5222\_Concurrent\_Jurisdiction\_signed.pdf; Rhode Island KDR.pdf

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Good afternoon,

This is Melissa Willette, New England Region Liaison with the Department of Defense State Liaison Office. Attached is the DoD's written testimony in support of HB 5222, which would create concurrent jurisdiction on military installation in Rhode Island, which would allow juvenile misconduct to be adjudicated in a local family court, instead of the federal court system.

I am unable to attend the public hearing due to a previously schedule legislative hearing, however, providing the attached written testimony ahead of the hearing. Also attached is the Knowledge Data Report, which outlines concurrent jurisdiction in Rhode Island.

We have connected with the JAG (lawyer's) Office at Naval Station Newport, and they did not have any concerns with the proposal. Due to the nature of other hearings we have participated in on this issue, I would offer the following answers to anticipated questions:

1. Concurrent jurisdiction would allow offenses committed by minors to be transferred to a state court and allow them to take advantage of juvenile review boards, diversionary programs, and services offered through the State. The state/family court would have the ability to deny the assumption of any case if they lack the bandwidth; which is the same prosecutorial discretion those courts already possess.
2. The goal of the policy is to produce better outcomes and reduce the likelihood that youth will end up in the juvenile justice system in the future.
3. Give youth who commit crimes on the property of federal military installations the same opportunities as those who commit crimes anywhere else in the state.

I sincerely apologize for not having the ability to participate in the hearing, however, should the committee have any specific questions, I would be happy to answer those!

Respectfully,

Melissa J Willette  
New England Region Liaison (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
DOD, Military Community and Family Policy

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