

Roberta DiMezza

From: Amy Katzen <amy.l.katzen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 9:55 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: H 5502

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Good morning,

I am writing to strongly support H 5502.

Under immigration law, certain minor convictions that are punishable by a year or more in prison may lead to detention, denial of necessary forms of immigration relief, and deportation for immigrants. By making a one-day change in the definition of “misdemeanor,” this bill would protect hundreds of Rhode Islanders - and their families and communities - from these unnecessary, harsh, destructive immigration consequences.

We are living through a terrifying assault on rule of law and due process in this country. Longtime members of communities across the nation are being stolen from their homes and off the streets, with no oversight of whether they are even the intended target. Immigration officials are storming courthouses and schools and violating civil rights with apparent impunity. Rhode Island must take every available step to minimize the risk to our state and the families who call the Ocean State our home.

Judges would still have the discretion to impose prison sentences up to 364 days instead of 365. Passing this legislation would help protect vulnerable members of our immigrant community, including asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence, who otherwise could be barred from immigration relief due to a misdemeanor conviction. States like New York, Washington, and Nevada have amended their criminal codes in recent years in this way to protect their residents against harsh immigration consequences. We must act now to protect the state’s immigrant community from the harsh consequences of federal law for instances of minor misconduct.

These are the decisions that will determine the character of our state and our future. I ask that you stand with Rhode Islanders to keep each other safe.

Sincerely,
Amy Katzen
Providence, RI