

**Roberta DiMezza**

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**From:** Sterling <sterling\_sanchez2@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 1:53 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee

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Sterling Sanchez

28 Apollo Rd

East Providence RI 02914

sterling\_sanchez2@yahoo.com

Date: April 1 ,2025

House Judiciary Committee

Rhode Island State House

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

Email: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB5502, the companion bill to SB0063, which aims to protect Rhode Islanders from deportation over minor misdemeanors.

### 1. Keeping Families Together

Many immigrant families in Rhode Island are deeply rooted in our communities—working, studying, and contributing to our shared prosperity. Deportation over minor misdemeanors threatens to separate parents from children, spouses from one another, and neighbors from the communities they help build. This bill would help ensure that families remain intact and continue to thrive in Rhode Island.

## 2. Promoting Public Safety

When individuals fear that minor legal issues might lead to deportation, they become less likely to report crimes or cooperate with law enforcement, out of concern that any contact with the legal system could jeopardize their status. By reducing the threat of deportation for low-level offenses, HB5502 fosters greater trust in law enforcement and the judicial system, ultimately making our communities safer.

## 3. Supporting Economic Stability

Rhode Island's economy benefits from the contributions of immigrants across various sectors—healthcare, education, small businesses, hospitality, and beyond. When a family member is deported over a minor issue, not only does it harm the individual, it also disrupts workplaces, schools, and local economies. This legislation ensures that hardworking Rhode Islanders are not unnecessarily removed from the workforce and the communities that rely on them.

## 4. Upholding Fairness and Proportionality

Our legal system is rooted in the principle that the punishment should fit the offense. Minor misdemeanors should not carry the disproportionately severe consequence of deportation. HB5502 restores a measure of fairness by protecting individuals from overly harsh penalties that far exceed the scope of the minor offenses in question.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB5502. This legislation is a crucial step toward safeguarding families, enhancing public safety, and preserving the economic and social fabric of our state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Rhode Island. I look forward to the committee's deliberation and a favorable outcome for this important bill.

Sincerely,

*Sterling Sanchez*