

Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
401-222-2258
HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

March 30, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of House bill H6041.

Dear Chairperson Craven and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am Elizabeth Mellen from House District 8. I am a lifelong Rhode Islander, Providence resident, and Brown University employee. I strongly support House bill H6041 and urge you to pass BAIL ON 32 without further delay.

I support H6041 because I have met and loved people who, with the odds stacked against them, have actively tried to get their lives back on track after being caught up in the carceral system. I imagine we all have.

BAIL ON 32 (H6041) would ensure that courts grant bail to individuals accused of probation violations while they await a violation hearing – a crucial step toward restoring due process rights for all Rhode Islanders. We all, regardless of past actions or probation status, deserve the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The decision to hold someone for weeks without a guilty charge has enormous impacts on families and communities. Heads of households lose jobs, families lose their homes, and children lose primary caregivers. These losses have lasting effects and disrupt countless people's abilities to improve their lives and contribute to society. This is a vital moment to uphold due process and protect the dignity of Rhode Islanders and, in turn, strengthen our communities.

I urge you to act now and pass H6041.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of bill H6041. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Mellen
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District 8
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