

Roberta DiMezza

From: E Z <zahniser.ellen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 1:23 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Pass BAIL ON 32 (H6041/S733) without further delay

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Dear Chairperson Representative Craven, Vice Chairperson Representative McEntee, and distinguished members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ellen Zahniser, and I am a resident of Providence. I am writing to urge you to pass BAIL ON 32 (H6041/S733) without further delay. This bill 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.

For nearly a decade, Rhode Islanders have advocated for reforming our probation system, which remains one of the harshest and most ineffective in the country. BAIL ON 32 has been introduced for five consecutive years, yet during this time, countless individuals have continued to be incarcerated at violation presentment hearings without any opportunity to present evidence or defend themselves. They have waited in the ACI for weeks—losing their jobs, housing, and families—often signing plea deals out of desperation. Even when charges are ultimately dropped, the damage done to their lives is irreversible.

The urgent need for reform has never been clearer. The nation is now watching Rhode Island after the tragic death of an elderly Indigenous woman at the ACI March 2023. She had stomach cancer and steadily declined for three months while awaiting a 32F violation hearing—a delay that, under a more just system, should never have happened.

This is a critical moment to uphold due process and protect the dignity of Rhode Islanders. The routine denial of bail for alleged probation violations is not only unjust but also undermines the safety and stability of our communities. Organizers have already worked to negotiate a crime of violence exception in the bill, addressing concerns while maintaining its core protections.

I urge you to act now and pass BAIL ON 32 (H6041/S733) without further delay.

Sincerely,
Ellen Zahniser
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160 Atlantic Ave, Providence 02907

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[We](#) are on native land !