

Opposition to House Bill H5225

Honorable Rhode Island Legislators:

I am opposed to House Bill H5225 for four major reasons:

- 1) Although the bill defines several terms contained in the law, it does not provide a definition for “immigrant,” particularly an immigrant who has arrived in the United States legally versus an immigrant who came to our country illegally. The former would not need safe spaces to hide from Immigration agents. So the intent of this bill is to protect migrants who have intentionally ignored Federal Immigration Law from Federal agents whose job it is to enforce immigration law. I am not in favor of this nor would the majority of Rhode Islanders be in favor of it if it was defined properly.
- 2) Section 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act allows Immigration Agents to interrogate or arrest any alien or person believed to be an alien “without warrant.” Thus, the requirement of this bill to have Federal agents produce a warrant in order to enter certain places, conflicts with Federal law. The only place a Federal agent must procure a warrant is if they are entering a person’s place of residence.
- 3) This bill also puts supervisors, directors and administrators of proposed safe space institutions in the precarious position of violating Federal law. Section 287 also states that interfering or obstructing in an arrest by an ICE agent is a crime. This bill seems to prohibit those in charge of these institutions with cooperating with Federal agents even if they wanted to. It requires them to obstruct the job of said agents and possibly commit a crime.
- 4) It is not wise for Rhode Island to sponsor sanctuary for illegal immigration. It will only awaken Federal Immigration agencies and possibly bring more and swifter enforcement to our state. Secondly, advertising that Rhode Island law will provide sanctuary to those who entered the county illegally will bring more to the state and this will be costly. It is estimated by the Federation for American Immigration Reform that Rhode Island spent \$230,445,009 on illegal immigration in 2024. That’s more than half of our projected deficit for 2025. I do not think most Rhode Islanders would appreciate this fact and this bill would only help increase that figure in the future.

After a disastrous mismanagement of immigration by the Biden administration, President Trump has stopped the flow of illegal crossings at the border and the Federal government is serious about enforcing immigration law. This what the people voted for. This is what the people wanted. H5225 is an obstruction to that purpose.

Signed: David Silvia, 153 Hummocks Avenue, Portsmouth RI