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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND**

### **TESTIMONY ON 24-H 8297, RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS – HAWKERS AND PEDDLERS May 30, 2024**

This bill expands the definition of door-to-door salespersons – and thus the restrictions and penalties that can be imposed on those violating municipal ordinances governing their activity – to include those who sell undefined “services.” Presently, the law addresses people who “deliver goods, wares or merchandise” door to door. The ACLU of Rhode Island has no position on the substantive goal of the bill, but we do wish to raise a concern about the possible unintended scope of this revision to the law.

If a person fails to obtain a license before engaging in this conduct, they may be subject to not only issuance of a \$200 fine, but also imprisonment for up to ten days. [Page 2, line 34 - Page 3, line 3].

Our concern is that the “services” regulated under this bill would, on its face, apply to teenagers who go door-to-door after a snowstorm and offer to shovel a person’s driveway for a small amount of money, or, in the summer, offer to mow a neighbor’s lawn. It seems overkill to require a license for performing those services, much less to have young people exercising this initiative face a prison sentence for failing to obtain a license. We assume that is not the intent of the bill, but we believe it would have that effect.

We therefore would encourage the committee to consider adoption of an amendment that would limit the scope of the law and avoid these scenarios. Thank you for considering our views.