Testimony: H8057

SUPPORT for Decriminalizing Sex Work

April 9th, 2026

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Eliza Sirpenski and I am the Administrative Policy Lead at The Womxn Project, a Providence-based nonprofit that focuses on bodily freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, and government transparency.

I am writing on behalf of The Womxn Project to express our support for the Decriminalizing Sex Work Bill, H8057. The purpose of this bill is to decriminalize certain types of sex work and shifts towards protecting those who are being exploited versus punishing them. It also allows for expungements of certain convictions related to sex work. Additionally, the bill intends to move focus towards punishing traffickers and other perpetrators of exploitation. Overall, it changes the way Rhode Island addresses sex work.

When sex work is decriminalized, victims of exploitation are more likely to come forward because they are not at risk of being punished. Passing H8057 is crucial because it shows victims/survivors that they have support. Furthermore, it stops treating consenting adults who willingly engage in sex work as criminals. Instead, it causes the focus to shift towards those who are exploiting others by reclassifying trafficking as a racketeering offense, allowing for harsher and more appropriate punishments for traffickers.

Please support H8057 to not only protect Rhode Islanders from the true threats to their safety, but to also ensure that survivors of exploitation/trafficking are heard and supported.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eliza Sirpenski

Administrative Policy Lead, The Womxn Project