

July 9, 2015

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Office of the Governor
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: VETO 15-H 6025A and 15-S 754A

Dear Governor Raimondo:

On June 25th, our organizations urged you to veto H-6025A and S-754A, legislation that would more than triple the distance, from 300 feet to 1,000 feet, that a Level III registered sex offender can live from a school. As we noted at the time, enactment of this legislation would actually be counter-productive to promoting public safety and undermine efforts to address the state's homelessness problem.

We write now to reiterate our veto request, encouraged by your actions earlier this week in creating a Criminal Justice Reinvestment working group and pointing out the need for an evidence-based approach to criminal justice reform. As our earlier letter suggested, this legislation is anything but evidence-based. To the contrary, it flies in the face of well-documented studies that show the harm of residency restrictions, and their potential impact in exacerbating homelessness.

Perhaps even more to the point, this legislation will also likely exacerbate the significant problem you highlighted concerning Rhode Island's enormous probation population. Because this legislation will largely affect, and create significant burdens on, individuals who are on probation, it is logical to assume that its enforcement will lead to unnecessary probation violations and jailing of individuals for those violations.

For all the reasons we previously expressed, and as a way of emphasizing the message underlying your recent executive order, we once again call upon you to veto H-6025 and S-754. As before, we remain ready and willing to provide you any additional information you need on this important matter.

Thank you again for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Steven Brown, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of RI
Barbara Kalil, Co-Chair & Outreach Worker, RI Homeless Advocacy Project
Jean Johnson, Executive Director, House of Hope CDC
Jim Ryczek, Executive Director, RI Coalition for the Homeless