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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 21 – H 5467 AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES – CRIMINAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY March 9, 2021

The ACLU of RI is appreciative of the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation which would grant immunity to individuals who are engaged in commercial sexual activity and who report a crime that they are either the victim of or witness to. Such statutory protection will critically ensure that sex workers do not encounter legal consequences should they need to seek medical or law enforcement assistance during the course of their work.

Such immunity is particularly important for sex workers, who can find themselves in stigmatizing and vulnerable situations where they may need help but fear seeking it because of the possible repercussions. The ability to report abuse, violence, or crime with the guarantee of immunity only makes the lives of sex workers safer; this legislation rightly ensures that no one will have to weigh the consequences of seeking help against any legal ramifications solely due to their occupation.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge passage of this legislation.