



128 DORRANCE STREET, SUITE 220  
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903  
401.831.7171 (t)  
401.831.7175 (f)  
[www.riaclu.org](http://www.riaclu.org)

July 9, 2015

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

**RE: VETO 15-S 132A and H-5158A**

Dear Governor Raimondo:

On June 26th, I sent you a letter urging you to veto S-132A and H-5158A, which would significantly increase the amount of time that inmates convicted of first- or second-degree murder would be required to serve before being eligible for parole. I am sending this brief follow-up letter in light of your new criminal justice reinvestment initiative.

We were extremely pleased with your comments, and those of other participants, on Tuesday about the need for criminal justice reform and for criminal justice policies that are driven by data. We look forward to the results emanating from your Working Group's activities. In the meantime, we believe that a veto of S-132 and H-5158 would demonstrate the seriousness of this mission, for these bills run counter to the goals expressed by you and others and epitomize precisely the wrong way to adopt criminal justice policy.

I will not repeat the various reasons expressed in my previous letter for urging your veto of these bills. I would only emphasize that, despite the undeniably high costs associated with the parole changes that these bills codify, a fiscal note was never prepared. It is true that since, constitutionally, the changes adopted by these bills could only be prospective, those costs will not be felt by the state for a number of years. But in light of your extensive work on the pension issue, you, perhaps more so than anybody else, know the dangerous consequences of passing legislation first and letting others worry later about the indisputable costs attendant to it.

We also believe that passage of this legislation, seemingly fueled by one Parole Board decision that some legislators strongly disagreed with, runs directly counter to the evidence-based approach that you noted should underlie criminal justice policy and that the Working Group is tasked with identifying.

Particularly in light of this latest initiative on your part, we once again strongly urge your veto of these bills. Thank you again for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Steven Brown  
Executive Director

cc: David Cruise