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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 20 – S 2557
AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY – STATE BUILDING CODE
March 3, 2020**

The ACLU strongly supports S 2557, which would guarantee that all newly constructed, public single-user bathrooms be gender neutral. This bill importantly addresses the need that many residents have for safe bathroom facilities which are sensitive to their potential privacy needs, and ensures accessibility to these facilities in a non-stigmatizing manner.

Not only does this bill address the difficulties that transgender or gender non-conforming individuals can have in accessing bathrooms safely, it additionally ensures that residents are not forced to weigh the risks of potentially outing their gender identity before utilizing the bathroom. Of course, since the bill applies only to single-user bathrooms, there are no privacy objections that can be raised by those who have expressed hostility towards gender non-conforming individuals.

This state has been a leader in protecting the rights of transgender individuals and this bill appropriately serves as another step in providing them further protection from discrimination. Due to the privacy and non-discriminatory benefits that this legislation would afford Rhode Islanders, we urge passage of this bill. Thank you for your consideration.