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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **TESTIMONY ON 25-S 154, RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- CERTIFICATION OF CHILDCARE AND YOUTH-SERVING WORKERS AND OPERATORS March 11, 2025**

The ACLU of RI wishes to express its strong support for this legislation which would waive the costs of criminal background checks for individuals seeking employment in a number of childcare positions.

Rhode Island General Laws §28-6.3-1 has long provided that “[n]o employer or agent of any employer shall charge a fee for the filing of an employment application.” Too often, though, that law has been undermined by other statutes, like those this bill would address, that require job applicants – and even volunteers – to pay for the “privilege” of being fingerprinted and having to prove their innocence in order to apply for a job or volunteer. The requirement is all the more egregious since the occupations for which this fee payment is demanded are often low-paying and female-dominated jobs and positions, as exemplified by the occupations this legislation addresses.

The General Assembly had good reason to ban employment application fees, but having to pay for a background check is, for all intents and purpose, precisely that kind of fee. If the state believes that a criminal record check is an essential component of being hired for a job, the state should take the responsibility for paying for it.

Because we believe that this bill furthers the policy contained in §28-6.3-1 and recognizes the unfairness of requiring job applicants to pay for this vetting, we urge passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.