

**From:** Ann Schroeder

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 3:57 PM

**To:** Tom Burditt; Kevin Christie; Joseph Andriano; Angela Arsenault; Ela Chapin; Kari Dolan; Kenneth Goslant; Thomas Oliver; Barbara Rachelson; Peninah Hodin; Martin LaLonde; William Notte

**Subject:** In support of S.27, An act relating to reducing the imposition of cash bail

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee and the Committee Assistant,

I am writing in support of S.27, An act relating to reducing the imposition of cash bail, that has been passed by the Senate and is now in your committee.

Please ask the Committee Assistant to add this to the record.

I support removing bail in cases of misdemeanors, having stakeholders develop long-term plans for eliminating all bail, and the collection of racial data on pre-trial detainees.

Holding people pre-trial simply because they can't pay bail is a discriminatory system. People of color, poor people, and people with disabilities are all more likely to be jailed for lack of means to make bail. Removing bail for many of these cases would be a start toward a more just system.

The cash bail system rests on the false assumption that people will not return to court unless they stand to lose money. However, New Jersey and Washington D.C. have eliminated bail, and the defendants' rates of appearance for trial after reforms were implemented are similar or better to rates of appearance before the reforms.

Even relatively short stays in jail can have cascading effects. Defendants lose their jobs, their cars, their homes, and even custody of their children, sometimes without having been convicted of a crime.

As of 3/29/23, per Department of Corrections (DOC) statistics, 396 people were held in Vermont prisons simply because they couldn't pay bail.

It costs a lot to keep someone in prison. The Department of Corrections says the [per capita cost](#) to incarcerate someone in Vermont in 2022 was

more than \$95,000. Also, if we didn't hold this many people prior to their trials, we wouldn't need to send people out of state to a private prison.

Illinois, California, and New Jersey have passed bills eliminating cash bail. Additional states are considering bills.

When Illinois Governor Pritzker signed his state's bill into law, he said "This legislation marks a substantial step toward dismantling the systemic racism that plagues our communities, our state and our nation and brings us closer to true safety, true fairness and true justice."

Please take this important step toward true justice in our state.

Thank you.

Ann Schroeder  
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