



February 24, 2025

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara, Chair
House Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 5292 – AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION–
REGIONAL VOCATION SCHOOLS**

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we express our support for House Bill 5292, which advances equitable access to high-quality education. Through the ACHIEVE UNITED initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we are committed to ensuring that every child—regardless of background—has the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed from early childhood through post-secondary education.

House Bill 5292 is a critical step in addressing educational disparities by investing in targeted programs that enhance student learning, provide additional support for multilingual learners, and strengthen academic and workforce success pathways. Expanding access to equitable education ensures a brighter future for Rhode Island’s children and a stronger economy for our state.

Career and technical education (CTE) programs are vital for equipping our students with the practical skills necessary to thrive in today’s competitive job market. House Bill 5292 emphasizes the importance of accurately tracking data related to these programs—such as student enrollment, completion rates, and post-program outcomes—so that districts can maintain comprehensive records. Such data collection not only ensures accountability but also provides a robust framework for assessing the effectiveness of CTE programming, enabling continuous improvement and tailored support for workforce development.

Furthermore, strong CTE initiatives play a crucial role in our state’s economic growth by directly linking education to labor market needs. According to the Rhode Island Research for Labor Statistics (2025), over 40% of students enrolled in CTE programs successfully transition into skilled employment or advanced training immediately upon graduation. This statistic underscores the transformative impact of CTE in addressing skill gaps and fostering a dynamic, competitive workforce. By requiring

[Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.](#)

districts to keep detailed records, House Bill 5292 ensures that we can measure success and adapt our strategies to meet the evolving demands of Rhode Island's labor market.

Investing in education is an investment in Rhode Island's future. House Bill 5292 will help ensure that all students—especially those in historically underserved communities—have the tools they need to thrive in school and beyond. By advancing equitable K-12 education policies, we can break cycles of poverty and create a pathway to long-term success for the next generation. We respectfully urge your support for this legislation to build a more just and prosperous Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way Rhode Island