



April 23rd, 2025

House Bill 5836– “Our History, Our Schools, Our Future: About Ethnic Studies Bill”

Dear Chair McNamara and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Hello my name is Alex, I am a student in the 11th grade and a youth leader with ARISE. I am writing to support House Bill No. 5836. Implementing Ethnic Studies statewide would open the minds of young people all over the state of Rhode Island. For my community, for my peers, and for my family it would mean that our efforts to be seen would finally be rewarded, and our fight to be represented in schools would be won.

As an Afro-Latina, I do not find myself represented at all in my history courses– at all. I do not see the natives of the Dominican Republic in the books that I read, I do not see their struggles acknowledged, nor do I see their accomplishments and achievements recognized during my school career. What I **do** see is the minimal mention of their founding by Christopher Columbus. I used to think that it was normal to not see people that resemble what I look like in my classwork, and in my history courses– but as I got older, and continued to do more research and learn more about my culture and history about my heritage, it made me realize that not only is my history being overlooked, its essentially being forgotten.

However, by showing students the history of their culture, and simultaneously acknowledging the consequences of imperialism and the lasting effects on these countries, allows for the **all** of the youth of Rhode Island, those of color and those that are not, to reflect on how the people **today** are impacted by colonialism and educate them on how to move forward **together** as a people, and build stronger bonds and community with one another.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony, for the communities, students, and families of Rhode Island, please consider passing House Bill 5836.

Alex  
10th Grade