

**MARCEL**

My name is Marcel, and I'm a Junior in Providence public schools and a youth leader with Youth In Action. I'm reaching out on behalf of OurSchoolsPVD to urge that you pass HB5836.

As a Rhode Island student, your support of this bill is meaningful to me because Ethnic Studies offers the opportunity for all students to further learn about their histories inside the classroom. Since Ethnic Studies isn't a mandatory class and many schools simply don't have Ethnic Studies at all, it sends a message to me and my friends that it is a privilege to learn about one's history and not a right. It says that the same cultures and communities that are so deeply rooted in the history of Rhode Island are actually not even important enough to mention in a unit. Even if my best friend were to know everything there is to know about her culture, this bill is so important because it matters that people know who she is. It is important that she knows her lineage is significant enough to have a classroom full of kids learning about it!

I've never had the opportunity to be in a real ethnic studies class. But thanks to my own interest in ethnic studies, I've been able to create relationships with other people and understand cultures like never before. I've been able to sympathize, laugh, relate, listen, and cultivate new friendships, all thanks to ethnic studies. This curriculum will help both incoming freshmen, and students who are already in high school beyond just helping them graduate.

I want to live in a Rhode Island where we celebrate our neighbors identities, cultures, and histories, and by passing HB5836 you would be helping!