

# Rhode Island Foundation

March 9, 2026

Representative Joseph McNamara, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
Room 135, State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair McNamara and members of the House Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter. As the state's community foundation, the Rhode Island Foundation is committed to supporting initiatives, like this, that expand opportunity and build a stronger, more connected Rhode Island.

With that in mind, I write to share that in relation to House Bill 7730 we have recently awarded a grant to facilitate participation of a Rhode Island cohort in the American Exchange Project (AEP). AEP seeks to foster connections among young Americans from diverse backgrounds through a two-week domestic exchange for high school seniors. Participants spend one week immersed in a host community different from their own—politically, socio-economically, and culturally—and a week welcoming peers to their hometowns. Since its inception in 2019, AEP has facilitated exchanges for nearly 1,000 students across 36 states.

The program's core design offers a structured opportunity for young Rhode Islanders to encounter diverse political, socioeconomic, and cultural perspectives firsthand. In alignment with the Foundation's Civic and Cultural Life community priority, we believe that when students engage with communities different from their own, they develop empathy, adaptability, and the capacity for constructive civic dialogue.

Sincerely,



Micah Salkind  
Director, Civic and Cultural Life

Cc: Rep. Thomas Noret, First Vice Chair, Rep. Rebecca Kislak, Second Vice

---

1 Union Station  
Providence, RI 02903

---

401.274.4564  
rifoundation.org

# Rhode Island Foundation

Chair, Rep. Nathan Biah, Rep. Julie Casimiro, Rep. Megan Cotter, Rep. Susan Donovan,  
Rep. Richard Fascia, Rep. Joshua Giraldo, Rep. Ramon Perez, Rep. Robert Phillips, Rep.  
Earl Read, Rep. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith, Rep. Sherry Roberts, Rep. Brandon Voas

---

1 Union Station  
Providence, RI 02903

---

401.274.4564  
[rifoundation.org](http://rifoundation.org)