



**Testimony in Support**  
**Council On Postsecondary Education - Student Success Act**  
***May 1st, 2025***

The Latino Policy Institute strongly supports the passage of H5745, which aims to amend the residency requirements for in-state tuition. By reducing the residency requirement from three years to six months, this legislation demonstrates our commitment to providing fair and equitable access to higher education for all students in Rhode Island.

This bill represents more than just a policy change; it embodies our values. By lowering the residency requirement, we affirm our dedication to inclusive and equitable access to higher education for all students in Rhode Island. The current three-year requirement has been a significant barrier for too many students, particularly first-generation, immigrant, undocumented, and multilingual youth who call our state home. These students have grown up here, graduated from our high schools, and wish to contribute to Rhode Island's future, but face obstacles in affording college due to arbitrary residency timelines.

All students benefit when we eliminate barriers to higher education. We have heard stories—both past and present—of talented and hardworking students who had to delay or abandon their college dreams simply because they had not lived in Rhode Island long enough to qualify for in-state tuition. This exclusion harms individuals and contributes to a talent drain that weakens our state's economic and social fabric.

The passage of H5745 will also significantly impact economic mobility. By enabling more students to afford college, we open doors to degrees, skills, and job opportunities that strengthen Rhode Island's workforce. As we seek to retain young talent and grow our economy, expanding access to college is not only the right thing to do—it's also the smart choice.

Importantly, this bill is fiscally responsible. According to the RI Office of Management and Budget, the projected fiscal impact is minimal:

FY2025: \$0  
FY2026: \$536,961  
FY2027: \$549,848

This modest investment offers a high return: a more educated population, a stronger workforce, and a more inclusive Rhode Island.

In conclusion, H5745 strengthens Rhode Island's future. It affirms our belief that every student deserves a fair chance at college, regardless of when they moved here. It invests in our state's young people and moves us closer to a higher education system that works for everyone.

I urge you to vote in favor of H5745. Let's open the doors to college for more Rhode Island students and keep our brightest minds right here, where they belong.

Marcela Betancur  
Executive Director  
Latino Policy Institute