

Chris O'Brien

From: Cranston Forward <cranstonforward@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 12:45 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Abney, Marvin L.; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Sen. Lawson, Valarie J; Sen. DiPalma, Louis P.
Subject: House Bill 5473

I am the chair of Cranston Forward, a grassroots organization that promotes civic engagement, government transparency and accountability, and policies that are equitable, sustainable and fiscally responsible.

Please accept this as my written testimony in support of H-5473, to create a 3% surtax on income over \$625,000 (after all deductions), to provide additional funding for state services, such as public transportation, roads and bridges, childcare, and senior services.

Members of Cranston Forward see in our own community how basic needs-- affordable housing and homelessness prevention, public transit, and school facilities, staffing and playgrounds, to name just a few--are perpetually underfunded in an artificial climate of resource scarcity, while a small percentage of citizens and businesses are allowed to accumulate inconceivable wealth without being required to contribute their fair share to the common good.

Now, this situation is being dramatically compounded by the Trump administration, which, despite inheriting a strong economy, has set about smashing and looting federal programs in a way that is about to make the financial needs of our state and local governments and our low and middle-income families much, much worse.

Americans--including Rhode Islanders--are coming to understand that this crisis atmosphere is not inevitable, but is the result of an economy and tax system that is increasingly rigged to benefit the wealthiest at the expense of the common good.

Things have become dangerously out of balance when our bridges and schools are literally falling down and more and more families are struggling to afford shelter and food, and the response of the federal government is to eliminate education, infrastructure and safety net programs in order to fund massive tax cuts for billionaires and large corporations.

Rhode Island must step up, and join our neighbors like Massachusetts, to start restoring some balance. House bill 5473 is a modest step. Requiring the wealthiest Rhode Islanders to contribute their fair share will at least partially offset the hit to our state and municipal budgets and to our most vulnerable citizens caused by the disastrous Trump administration policies.

We urge you to approve this bill.

Respectfully,

Karen Rosenberg
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