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Representative Marvin Abney, Chair
RI House Finance Committee

Dear Chairman Abney and esteemed members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5473, also known as the "Revenue for Rhode Island" bill, sponsored by Representative Karen Alzate.

At a time when Rhode Island has a multi-million dollar budget deficit due to the end of COVID-19 relief dollars and facing funding uncertainty from proposed cuts to essential social services at the federal level, we need a new source of local revenue to ensure that Rhode Island survives the economic chaos ahead of us. It is time to take bold and evidence-based steps to lead our state through the next three years. These bills will create the necessary funding for financial security with an annual increase in revenue that is desperately needed to make sure Rhode Islander's have access to healthcare, education, affordable housing, and reliable transportation. It is more important than ever to take action to support Rhode Island's working families, children, seniors, and ensure a baseline quality of life through sustainable funding for public services.

As a single mother of two young Rhode Islanders that attend public school, I am deeply concerned about the proposed federal cuts to education. I live in Cranston and like many other municipalities across the state, our City Council is negotiating the city budget which needs more investment for our schools. This will cause a raise in our taxes. Revenue for our schools is critically important to the future of our state, but the persistent increases in costs of living to everyday working families is reaching a breaking point for many of my neighbors. In a household like mine, with every increase in costs of living, I need to adjust my budget to make sure I can take care of my children. Food costs more, clothing, transportation, healthcare, and housing - my home owners insurance just doubled - we need a contingency plan at the state level to ensure that there is enough funding to support working Rhode Islanders. I pay my fair share in taxes to support these public services, my wealthy neighbors should too.

Respectfully,
Kristina Brown