



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

May 15, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance

RE: In support of House Bill 5981, An Act Relating to Education – The Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act

Dear Chair Abney,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5981, legislation requesting funding for effective civics education instruction in every school district across the state.

As Secretary of State, one of my top priorities has been to expand the Department of State's civic education programming by establishing partnerships with middle and high schools across the state, including classroom visits, mock elections, and the Civic Liaison Program for students. These programs aim to encourage greater civic engagement among our state's youth.

We know that action-civics projects where students put their knowledge into action are how they learn best. Subsequently, this helps inform their participation in their respective communities going forward, enhancing their potential lifelong civic engagement. This legislation will specifically provide funding for teacher professional development in civics, the creation of a civic education curriculum, and support for the implementation of student-led civic projects.

As a former history and civics history teacher for over 30 years, I know how crucial it is to educate our students on both our history and how to participate in our democracy. Our youth should be engaged in our democratic processes and should have the opportunity to participate fully when available.

All young people deserve meaningful civic engagement and professional development that provides them with an array of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Therefore, I urge this committee to support the funding request proposed in House Bill 5981. It will ensure that our teachers have the tools they need to implement civics in their curriculums and that students have the support they need to be civically engaged.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable June Speakman

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

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