

**Written Testimony in Support of HJR 7127, Article 5 and Rep. Alzate's H-7313
House Finance Committee Hearing – March 3, 2026**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Alison Tovar, and I am an Associate Professor at the Brown University School of Public Health. My research focuses on food and nutrition insecurity, economic hardship, and their impacts on health and child well-being. I am writing in support of the Governor's proposal to create a 3% surtax on income above one million dollars, and to encourage the General Assembly to go further by passing Representative Alzate's H-7313 to tax the top 1%.

We applaud Governor McKee for including this widely supported proposal in his budget. A 3% surtax on income above one million dollars would generate approximately \$135 million per year in revenue for Rhode Island. However, given the magnitude of the fiscal and public health challenges facing our state, we believe the General Assembly should adopt the stronger top 1% proposal, which would generate an estimated \$203 million per year — \$68 million more annually than the millionaires tax.

Rhode Island is currently facing a projected \$100 million budget gap for FY27. At the same time, federal policy changes under H.R. 1 are expected to have devastating consequences for our state. In FY28 alone, Rhode Island is projected to lose nearly \$400 million in combined state and federal Medicaid funding, and more than 53,000 residents could lose access to healthcare coverage. An additional 14,000 Rhode Islanders are at risk of losing SNAP benefits.

As a public health researcher, I see firsthand how reductions in healthcare coverage and food assistance translate into worsening health outcomes, increased food insecurity, and greater long-term costs to the state. Medicaid and SNAP are not simply safety net programs — they are foundational investments in health, workforce participation, and economic stability. When families lose access to healthcare or food assistance, the consequences ripple across our healthcare system, schools, and local economies.

In this context, raising adequate and sustainable revenue is not optional — it is necessary. When everyone pays their fair share, everyone benefits. Importantly, under Representative Alzate's H-7313, the wealthiest Rhode Islanders would still be paying income tax rates comparable to those in neighboring Massachusetts. This proposal would ensure competitiveness while strengthening our fiscal capacity to meet urgent needs.

Given the scale of the looming Medicaid and SNAP losses and the projected state budget shortfall, we must act proactively. I respectfully urge you to pass Article 5 and adopt the stronger top 1% proposal in H-7313 to ensure Rhode Island has the resources necessary to protect healthcare access, reduce food insecurity, and support the well-being of families across our state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership during this critical time.

Sincerely,
Alison Tovar, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Tovar". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Associate Professor^[SEP]

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