



**Testimony in Support**  
**The Education Equity And Property Tax Relief Act**  
***April 28, 2026***

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H7581. The Latino Policy Institute (LPI) supports this legislation because it establishes a dedicated investment in civics education ensuring that students across Rhode Island are equipped with the knowledge and skills to engage in civic life and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

H7581 creates a new categorical funding stream for civics education, beginning with \$1 million annually and prioritizing teacher professional development, student-led civic projects, and district-level support. The bill also directs funding based on district need, including factors such as socioeconomic status and the number of multilingual learners.

This proposal is significant because it moves beyond access to instruction and focuses on quality and implementation. By investing in professional development, culturally responsive teaching, and project-based learning, the bill supports approaches that strengthen student engagement and real-world application of civic knowledge.

From a fiscal perspective, this is a strategic investment with long-term benefits. High-quality civics education is associated with increased civic participation, stronger community engagement, and improved workforce readiness. It also builds critical skills such as media literacy, communication, and problem-solving competencies that are essential across sectors.

This investment is especially important for Latino students, multilingual learners, and students from underserved communities, who have historically faced barriers to civic participation. Expanding access to high-quality civics education helps ensure that all students are prepared to participate in decision-making processes that shape their lives and communities.

H7581 also includes accountability measures, including oversight from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and evaluation of program effectiveness, to ensure that funds are used intentionally and lead to measurable outcomes.

In a constrained fiscal environment, targeted investments that strengthen both educational and civic outcomes are essential. H7581 reflects that approach. For these reasons, LPI respectfully urges the Committee to support H7581.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Awilda Reinoso Lopez  
Senior Policy & Research Manager  
Latino Policy Institute