



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: House Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: April 28, 2026
Re: Civics Education Categorical Aid
Testimony in **Support of H 7581** (Speakman, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of H 7581, legislation that strengthens civics education by establishing a dedicated funding stream to support instruction, curriculum, and educator professional development.

Rhode Island students benefit from high-quality civics education that prepares them to engage as informed and active participants in their communities. However, districts often lack the dedicated resources needed to support robust civics programming, including project-based learning opportunities, updated instructional materials, and meaningful professional development for educators.

H 7581 establishes a new categorical funding stream to support civics education across all districts, with a focus on teacher professional development, student-led civic learning projects, and curriculum development. The bill also ensures that funding is distributed based on district need, including student population and levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, helping to promote equitable access to high-quality civics education statewide.

From the perspective of educators, effective civics instruction requires both time and resources to implement engaging, student-centered learning experiences. Investments in professional development and curriculum support allow teachers to better connect classroom learning to real-world civic engagement and ensure students are prepared for participation in a democratic society.

This proposal represents a thoughtful investment in both students and educators, strengthening civic learning while supporting the professional capacity of Rhode Island's teaching workforce.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H7581.

356 SMITH STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-3761 (401) 273-9800 FAX (401) 331-8815

• **Maribeth K. Calabro**, President • **Maria Manzi**, Executive Assistant • **Bridget McDonough**, Administrative Assistant •
• **Michael J. Mullane**, Field Representative • **James A. Parisi**, Field Representative •
• **Christopher Lambert**, Field Representative • **Jeremy Sencer**, Field Representative •
• **Sean Doyle**, Field Representative •