

April 27, 2026

Subject: SUPPORT for H7581 – Investing in Student-Led Civics

Dear Chair **Marvin L. Abney** and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Julie Nora, I live in Cumberland and I am the Director of the International Charter School, a statewide charter school located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. I write today to urge you to support **H7581**.

When the Civic Literacy Act was passed in 2021, it came with a promise for a better civics education, but without the \$1 million categorical fund proposed in this legislation, that promise remains out of reach for many schools. In my experience, civics is most impactful when it isn't just about reading a textbook but also about being involved in our communities, such as a recent lesson at ICS.

A couple of weeks ago, the 5th graders at the International Charter School hosted the two current Pawtucket Mayoral candidates in a Questions and Answer session. This was part of a several week civics unit in which they learned about city government, elections, the role of a mayor, the two candidates, and the City of Pawtucket. They led the session, asking questions that they and their families came up with, being time keepers, registering guests..... It was extremely powerful to see the two mayoral candidates preparing for the session and answering students' questions. This was empowering for the students and their families.



This bill provides \$600,000 specifically for student-led projects like this and the resources needed to make them happen.

Without this funding, schools like mine may not have the extra budget for project materials or travel. Our students aren't just the leaders of tomorrow; they are members of our communities today. We need the tools and funding to make sure our teachers can best guide them. Please support this bill to ensure that the next generation and those who follow are ready to lead.

Sincerely,



Julie Nora, Ph.D.
Director