



Louisa D'Ovidio
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
222 Chestnut Street, 1st Floor
Providence, RI, 02903
4/24/2026

Support for H7581 – Equity and Accountability in Civics

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Louisa D'Ovidio, and I am a Cranston community member who works with Rhode Island youth in my capacity as the Programs Manager at Women's Fund of Rhode Island. I am writing to advocate for the passage of **H7581**.

Our state must dedicate a \$1 million categorical fund to ensure equitable civic education. By prioritizing student population size, socioeconomic status, and various dimensions of need, RIDE can ensure that funding is distributed equitably and that students of all backgrounds, not just those in districts that already have the most resources, can afford high-quality civics.

By moving beyond rote memorization to applied, experiential learning, this funding equips our students with durable, real-world college and career skills—such as consensus-building, collaborative problem-solving, media literacy, and public speaking—fostering the leadership and resilience necessary to navigate a complex workforce and a diverse, rapidly developing society. Civic engagement is vital for the health of a robust democracy, and the youth of Rhode Island deserve a robust civic education to ensure this.

I also want to highlight the importance of the RI Civic Readiness Task Force. This bill ensures a continuous feedback loop where parents, students, and community advocates have a formalized role in advising the state. This isn't just about writing a check; it's about building an annual cycle of accountability and community-led improvement. Let's make sure every child in Rhode Island has the opportunity to become a lifelong, engaged citizen.

Sincerely,

Louisa D'Ovidio
40 Midland Drive
Cranston, RI, 02920