



May 7, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7313

On behalf of NEARI, a union of 12,000 hard working educators, I write in strong support of the proposed legislation to raise taxes on the wealthiest one percent of Rhode Islanders. This measure represents a critical and timely investment in the future of our state. It will make Rhode Island a more affordable place to live for the working people who keep our state running.

As you are no doubt aware, this legislation does not raise taxes on small business or the vast, vast majority of Rhode Islanders. Instead, it raises taxes on the top 1% of income earners, those with a taxable family income of over \$640,000, by 3%. This number is notable for two reasons. First, it brings our top tax rate in line with neighboring Massachusetts. Second, this 3% tax is equivalent to the average tax cut the top 1% of earners got from the Trump Budget Bill. That bill, which disproportionately cut taxes for the wealthiest Americans, is going to have devastating impacts here in Rhode Island.

Working people are being crushed by the rising cost of living, and we are already seeing how Trump's budget bill is making life unaffordable. Healthcare costs for employers and families, including for our members, are skyrocketing as a direct result of Trump's cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. This is driving up costs for local school districts, meaning higher property taxes for the rest of us and less funding for the education our students deserve. On top of these costs, the state is facing a significant financial burden from cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, public health, and new unfunded federal requirements.

Who benefits from all these cuts to healthcare, food assistance, public health, and education? The top 1%; the very individuals who will be asked to contribute a little more if this bill passes. This bill sets the overall effective tax rate for the top 1% at the rate it was at prior to the Trump tax cuts. And the revenue the bill raises will help fill the gap left by federal cuts. That is fair and sound fiscal policy.

The revenue raised by this bill would go a long way if invested in our public education system and public services. As you are no doubt aware, the Rhode Island foundation recently completed a Blue Ribbon Commission that made needed recommendations to update our school funding formula, things such as shifting the burden of out-of-district transportation from local communities to the state. Those recommendations are desperately needed for property tax payers, educators, and students. This bill can help fund those changes.

The revenue could go to shore up our great public colleges, like CCRI and URI, who are doing an excellent job educating the future citizens and workforce of our state under a constant barrage of federal changes and cuts to funding. It could help provide housing for students who come to Rhode Island, contribute so much to our economy, but can no longer afford the rent.

The revenue could shore up the vital work done by the Rhode Island Department of Health, which have seen significant federal cuts and an atmosphere of chaos and instability. They do incredible work keeping us all healthy, and they need more support.

Rhode Island could use this revenue to shore up RIPTA, invest in high-quality childcare, or plug budget holes in Medicaid and SNAP created by an irresponsible federal government whose top priority is giving the rich a tax break, even if that means pushing the costs on to the working people of this country.

This bill is an important step towards a more just, affordable Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

Fil Eden

Assistant Exec Director/ UniServ

NEARI