



May 12, 2026

The Honorable Committee chair,  
Senate Finance Committee  
Room 211, Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB7689, HB 7690 -- Support

Honorable members,

At Progreso Latino, our mission is to help Rhode Island's Latino and immigrant Communities achieve greater self-sufficiency and socio-economic progress by providing transformational programs that support personal growth and social change. Progreso Latino writes in strong support of HB 7689 and HB 7690.

The cash assistance program has been a lifeline for many of our families and children in deep poverty. Cash assistance plays a crucial role in supporting our marginalized communities as it provides immediate financial relief, empowerment and choice, and support during these economic hardships our state is facing right now. It is our duty to break the cycle of poverty as cash assistance is a stepping stone to help individuals and families improve their financial stability as it also gives people the chance to pursue their education or provide job opportunities. By increasing the cash assistance to 100% of the poverty level it addresses the impact of our economic downturn. Marginalized communities, including low-income families, people of color, and rural populations, often have fewer opportunities for well-paying jobs and face systemic barriers to economic mobility. Cash assistance can provide immediate relief to families, but it also helps in preventing long-term poverty by allowing people to cover essential needs like rent, groceries, and healthcare. When people are able to meet these basic needs, they can focus on longer-term goals. It reflects a societal commitment to reducing inequality to help individuals move toward self-sufficiency. It's not just about offering temporary relief; it's about providing individuals and families with the opportunity to thrive and build a better future.

As part of coalition efforts Progreso Latino finds it important that we also prioritize eliminating the 5 year waiting period for residents to apply for the cash assistance program. Many residents, including immigrants find themselves in urgent need of financial assistance due



to circumstances beyond their control. Excluding residents from cash assistance programs based on their length of residence contributes to a sense of inequality and division within communities. Central Falls is founded on immigrants, and as we provide direct service to assist those in need we first hand witness parents unable to provide for their children due to a lack of financial support, which leads to negative outcomes such as food insecurity, housing instability, and long term risk to their health and well-being. Our food pantry receives over 400 people each Wednesday, many families are in the process of eviction due to non-payment because of the high rent increase, and many face depression due to their circumstances. We are placing our families to make difficult financial choices and prioritize what they need most as they cut back on non-essential items. At this point families are placed in a position of survival. Eliminating the 5-year waiting period as well as eliminating the \$65 reduction for those in subsidized housing ensures that all people in need have access to the support they need.

Thank you to all lead sponsors and their co-sponsors for their leadership, and thank you to the honorable members of the House Finance Committee for your consideration of this impactful legislation.

Sincerely,

Jonathan De Jesus

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