

ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

**TESTIMONY ON 26-H 8252,
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
May 12, 2026**

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this bill, which would helpfully expand the law enacted in 2021 designed to allow immigrant students to qualify for resident tuition at the state's public universities, colleges, and community colleges. That legislation was critical to ensure that tuition for higher education was accessible to students who were residents of Rhode Island but did not have formal federal citizenship status. This bill would go further by making it easier for *all* students, not just immigrants, to qualify for in-state tuition by reducing from three years to one year the amount of time the student must have been attending high school in the state.

As higher education becomes both a necessity for economic mobility and an increasingly costly financial investment, access to in-state tuition can make a significant difference in the lives of Rhode Island residents going to college. Especially for students who are undocumented, who are children of refugees or other individuals with legal status, or who are in military families whose parents are stationed in Rhode Island, the benefit of having affordable and accessible higher education close to home cannot be overstated.

Affordable access to college is a crucial component of educational equity. As Rhode Island takes steps towards creating a high-achieving public education system, the ability for students in these special situations to make further progress towards their career and academic goals must also be taken into consideration. We therefore support this legislation for further effectuating the goal of the law that this body enacted five years ago.

Thank you for considering our views.