



**Testimony in Support**  
**The Education Equity And Property Tax Relief Act**  
*May 19, 2026*

The Latino Policy Institute respectfully submits testimony in support of H8270, legislation that would strengthen Rhode Island's education funding formula by increasing support for multilingual learners (MLLs) and students living in poverty.

Rhode Island's student population is increasingly multilingual, multicultural, and economically diverse. Yet many school districts continue to face significant challenges in providing the level of academic, language, social-emotional, and wraparound support necessary to ensure all students can succeed. H8270 recognizes the reality that educating students with greater needs requires additional resources and targeted investment.

The Latino Policy Institute strongly supports efforts to strengthen and modernize the state's education funding formula to better reflect the true cost of educating multilingual learners and students experiencing economic hardship. The bill would revise the calculation for the student success factor by adding an additional twenty-five percent (25%) multiplier for multilingual learners and students whose family income falls below one hundred eighty-five percent (185%) of the federal poverty guidelines.

This investment is particularly important for communities serving large numbers of Latino, immigrant, multilingual, and working-class students. Multilingual learners often require additional instructional support, bilingual programming, translation and interpretation services, culturally responsive family engagement, and specialized staffing to ensure meaningful access to education. Similarly, students living in poverty may require additional academic interventions, mental health supports, afterschool programming, and other wraparound services that extend beyond core classroom instruction.

Research consistently demonstrates that equitable funding systems are critical to improving educational outcomes and addressing opportunity gaps. Rhode Island's funding formula should continue evolving to reflect both the changing demographics of the state and the growing needs of students and families. Investments in multilingual learners are not only investments in educational equity, but also investments in Rhode Island's long-term economic and workforce future.

The Latino Policy Institute also appreciates the bill's continued emphasis on accountability, reporting, and data-informed planning related to multilingual learner populations and funding implementation. Ensuring that resources are aligned with student needs and best practices is essential to achieving meaningful outcomes.

At its core, H8270 acknowledges that students do not all begin with the same level of access or opportunity, and that Rhode Island's education funding system must respond accordingly. Providing districts with the resources necessary to support high-need students is essential to building a more equitable and effective public education system.

For these reasons, the Latino Policy Institute respectfully urges the House Finance Committee to support passage of H8270.

Thank you for your consideration.

Awilda Reinoso Lopez  
Latino Policy Institute