



March 4, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: TESTIMONY ON HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION H 8121 – CREATING THE IMMIGRANT IMPACT TASK FORCE

Chair McEntee and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we support the intent of **H 8121** and respectfully offer several recommendations to strengthen the resolution. H 8121 would establish an 11-member Immigrant Impact Task Force to examine the effects of immigration enforcement and related policies in Rhode Island, including detention conditions, discrimination, language access, state contracts, and other community impacts, and to report its findings to the General Assembly by **January 5, 2027**.

United Way's policy and advocacy work is guided by our strategic framework: **Strong Families, Strong Nonprofits, Strong United Way**. Under our **Strong Families** pillar, we support policies that reduce barriers to safety, stability, and opportunity. Immigration enforcement practices can shape whether immigrant families feel safe engaging with public institutions and essential services. National survey data shows broad concern among immigrant communities regarding current enforcement practices, underscoring the importance of a thoughtful Rhode Island review. (*KFF/New York Times 2025 Survey of Immigrants: Political Implications of Immigrant Voters' Views on Immigration Enforcement*).

To strengthen the resolution, we offer three recommendations.

First, include a real-time statewide data partner, such as United Way 211.

If the Task Force is intended to understand current impacts on families and communities, it should incorporate timely, aggregated data on emerging needs. A trusted statewide platform like **211** can help identify trends related to housing instability, food access, legal assistance, and language barriers; allowing the Task Force to connect policy conditions to real community impact.

Second, clarify key definitions and deliverables at the outset.

The resolution covers broad areas of inquiry. Greater clarity on what the Task Force will measure, how information will be validated, and what recommendations should include would help ensure a more focused and actionable final report.

Third, establish a clear public reporting framework.

Because the resolution is intended to inform policymakers and the public, the Task Force should



outline what information will be published, how often it will be shared, and in what format. A standardized reporting structure would strengthen transparency, accountability, and usefulness.

United Way of Rhode Island appreciates the Committee's consideration. With stronger data integration, clearer expectations, and a practical reporting framework, **H 8121** can better support evidence-based policymaking and improve how Rhode Island responds to the needs of immigrant families.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

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United Way of Rhode Island