



April 7, 2026

**Subject: Testimony in Support of H-7644 – Increasing Court Filing Fees to Support Rhode Island Legal Services**

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing approximately 7,500 essential workers across Rhode Island, including healthcare, home care, and child care workers, we write in support of H-7644. Please accept this as written testimony, as I was unfortunately unable to attend the hearing.

SEIU 1199NE also represents attorneys at Rhode Island Legal Services who provide legal assistance to low-income Rhode Islanders across the state.

H-7644 makes modest adjustments to court filing fees and increases the portion of those fees that is directed to Rhode Island Legal Services. This is a straightforward and meaningful step that strengthens a key funding stream supporting access to justice.

The attorneys we represent see firsthand what happens when people are forced to navigate the legal system without representation. Individuals facing eviction, survivors of domestic violence seeking protection orders, seniors trying to access benefits, and families dealing with custody issues are often left to manage complex legal processes on their own. The result is worse outcomes for families and more strain on the court system.

Rhode Island Legal Services helps ensure that the civil justice system works for everyone—not just those who can afford an attorney. The additional funding provided through this bill will help sustain that work, support frontline legal staff, and expand access to legal assistance for people who need it most.

This legislation has been introduced in prior years, and the need has only grown. The Senate Judiciary Committee has already moved the companion bill forward for passage. This is a practical, long-discussed proposal, and this should be the year it gets across the finish line.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support H-7644.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "e".

Alex Moore

Political Director

SEIU 1199NE

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