



March 5, 2025

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chair

House Committee on Labor

Rhode Island Statehouse

Providence RI, 02903

**RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 5029: An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations –
Minimum Wages**

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we express our support for Bill Number 5029, which aligns with our commitment to ensuring that all Rhode Islanders have access to economic opportunity and financial stability. Through the LIFT UNITED initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we work to remove barriers to financial security, support workforce development, and strengthen pathways to upward mobility. Equity is at the heart of our mission, ensuring historically marginalized communities have the resources to thrive.

Bill Number 5029 represents an opportunity to expand economic opportunity, enhance financial literacy, and provide essential supports that empower individuals and families to achieve long-term stability and greater socioeconomic mobility.

Rhode Island continues to experience increasing challenges related to the cost of living, with wages struggling to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of essential goods. According to the latest Economic Progress Institute (EPI) Standard of Need report, the gap between wages and living expenses continues to widen, particularly for low-income workers. The current minimum wage in Rhode Island does not adequately support families, with individuals working full-time at the state minimum wage still falling below the federal poverty line. By gradually raising the minimum wage to \$20 per hour by 2030, Bill 5029 will help close this gap and provide economic security for thousands of Rhode Islanders. The increased wages will enable workers to meet basic needs such as housing, food, and healthcare, contributing to their overall financial well-being.

Furthermore, the EPI report emphasizes the burden of Rhode Island's high cost of living, particularly in areas like housing and child care, which are disproportionately challenging for low-wage earners. By

[Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.](#)

passing this bill, Rhode Island can make a long-term investment in its workforce, ensuring that people can support their families and achieve financial independence without having to rely on public assistance programs.

Financial stability should not be a privilege—it is a necessity. By supporting Bill Number 5029, Rhode Island can continue making strides toward economic mobility for all. This investment will ensure families can access the resources they need to thrive, reducing long-term reliance on emergency assistance and strengthening our local economy. We urge you to support this measure and stand with us in our commitment to creating a more equitable and financially secure Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way Rhode Island