



March 18, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese  
Chair, House Committee on Labor  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7770

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the educators and education support professionals represented by the National Education Association Rhode Island (NEARI), I write in support of this legislation to establish a predictable schedule of minimum wage increases and future adjustments tied to inflation.

While NEARI is widely recognized for representing teachers, our union also proudly represents thousands of education support professionals across Rhode Island's public schools, including paraprofessionals, bus monitors, custodians, and other essential school staff. Many of these dedicated employees perform vital work that supports student safety, learning, and the day-to-day functioning of our schools, yet their wages are often near the state's minimum wage.

For these workers, minimum wage policy is not an abstract economic discussion—it directly affects their ability to support their families and remain in the school communities they serve. Bus monitors who ensure students travel safely, custodians who maintain clean and healthy school buildings, and other support staff who assist students every day deserve compensation that reflects the importance of their work.

Equally important, this legislation provides predictability. By establishing scheduled increases to the minimum wage through 2027 and tying future adjustments to the Consumer Price Index, the bill creates a transparent and predictable framework for both workers and employers. Employees gain certainty that wages will keep pace with rising costs of living, while school districts and other employers can anticipate and plan for future adjustments.

Predictability in wage policy is particularly important in the public education system, where budgets are set years in advance and school leaders must plan responsibly for staffing costs. A clear, scheduled approach to minimum wage increases helps ensure that support staff can earn fair wages while allowing districts to responsibly plan for those obligations.

Rhode Island's schools rely on the contributions of many professionals beyond the classroom teacher. The bus monitor greeting students each morning, the custodian ensuring safe and clean facilities, and the support staff assisting students with their daily needs are all integral members of the education community. Ensuring that the minimum wage rises in a predictable and responsible manner helps recognize the value of their work and supports the stability of the workforce that our schools depend on.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Alexander Lucini  
Government Relations Director, NEARI