

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Amelia Lopez <amelia@southsideclt.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 2:28 PM  
**To:** House Rules Committee  
**Subject:** Please Support H5010

Dear Representative Kathleen Fogarty and Members of the Committee,

Since 1981, Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT) has been dedicated to centering the needs and livelihoods of South Providence's most vulnerable populations. Our commitment to the development of BIPOC youth and the empowerment of refugee communities—ensuring their true autonomy and promoting food sovereignty—demonstrates how equity is the foundation of collective liberation. This principle drives all of our programs including workforce development for youth and adults, business development and community revitalization, making land available for community gardens and both urban and rural farms, healthy food access through produce prescriptions and farmers markets and climate resiliency through greenspace development and promotion of regenerative agriculture.

SCLT supports Rhode Islanders to have ownership and power over food systems that offer culturally familiar, locally produced, affordable, and healthy food by working toward equitable access to land and markets, providing education, and fostering opportunities to grow food in environmentally sustainable ways.

SCLT also recognizes that the most significant obstacle to accomplishing our mission is racial injustice. The fundamental reason all people in Rhode Island don't have access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food is because food systems—along with other economic and social systems—are structured in a way that denies equal access to Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous and all people of color. This is why **we strongly support H5010**.

If race equity were achieved all people of color would have the means to choose to grow and eat healthy food or succeed in a farming occupation. Everyone would have access to the traditional foods and preparation methods that help maintain our cultures and benefit from improved quality of life associated with growing and preparing our own food. People of color would benefit from local farms and businesses that keep both food and money in our communities, would experience lower rates of diet-related chronic disease and would live in communities where healthy food is plentiful.

Most of the people with whom SCLT works are faced with racial injustice everyday. The communities where we work are made up of mostly Black and Brown people. We know that the work we do can create meaningful connections between people of all backgrounds and, if done with this in mind, can advance racial justice and full equity. While SCLT implements practical, on the ground programs, the impact is limited if we are not also working to eliminate the racist constructs that create obstacles to our success.

**SCLT is hopeful that Equity Impact Statements are one tool that can be used by RI state policymakers to make sure we plan for and achieve equitable food access in the future.**

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal and voting H5010 out of committee.

Sincerely,

Amelia Lopez, Southside Community Land Trust

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