



RHODE ISLAND WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

Representative Evan Shanley, Chair
House State Government and Elections Committee

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Support for H-7736 An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Impact Statement

Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Party writes in support of Rep. Cassar's bill, H-7736, to require that the general assembly provide equity impact statements on legislation. The Working Families Party advocates for policies that improve the lives of working people and address the needs of residents who have too often been neglected or negatively impacted by public policy-making. By mandating that bills explicitly consider the impact on racial, ethnic, gender, and disability disparities, this legislation helps bring those considerations to the forefront.

By identifying the positive or negative impacts that legislation would have on equity, this bill would help representatives and senators understand the effects of the legislation they are proposing. It would help flag a bill's impacts on disparities in Rhode Island from the outset and allow legislators to consider them and make amendments in real-time rather than years after the bill has been in place. In doing so, this would help decrease disparities and improve equity in the state.

The Working Families Party often testifies in support of bills that promote economic justice and allow working people to meet their basic needs and get respect in the workplace. This legislation is important both in itself and because it often helps address racial, ethnic, gender, and disability disparities. To have all legislation include a brief statement summarizing its impact on those disparities would center the needs of Rhode Islanders who are often underrepresented in the halls of power. We hope the legislature will move forward with this bill to ensure that the needs of all our residents are considered in policy-making.

Thank you,

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler
Rhode Island Working Families Party