

Re: Testimony in Support of S2238 — An Act Relating to Taxation: Personal Income Tax

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is [YOUR NAME]. I am a [YOUR JOB TITLE], and I am testifying today in my capacity as [Your Union Officer Title] for SEIU Local 580, which represents frontline workers across Rhode Island's public sector, including social workers, caseworkers, child protective investigators, and supervisors at DCYF.

I am here today to express SEIU Local 580's strong support for S2238.

At its core, this bill addresses a fundamental issue facing the state: whether Rhode Island has the revenue needed to sustain the services, workforce, and systems that residents depend on.

S2238 does this in a targeted and balanced way. It introduces a three percent surtax on taxable income exceeding \$640,000 — impacting only the highest earners in the state, roughly the top one percent. This approach generates new revenue without increasing the burden on working families or the public employees who deliver essential services every day.

The members of SEIU Local 580 are not high-income earners. They are public servants — social workers, investigators, and supervisors — doing complex, high-stakes work with children and families, often for salaries that do not keep pace with the cost of living. They are already contributing their fair share.

What they see every day is the consequence of limited resources.

When services are unavailable or delayed, the burden does not disappear — it shifts. It falls on the workforce. Caseworkers and supervisors absorb that strain, managing crises while trying to move cases forward without the tools they need. That dynamic contributes directly to burnout, turnover, and instability in critical roles.

At the same time, the state continues to face real budget constraints. Without new revenue, those constraints limit the ability to invest in staffing, build service capacity, and improve outcomes for the children and families we serve.

This is why S2238 matters.

It creates a pathway for the state to generate revenue in a way that is both fair and economically targeted — asking more from those with the greatest capacity to contribute, while protecting working Rhode Islanders from additional burden.

To be clear, generating revenue is only the first step. How those funds are ultimately allocated will determine whether we see meaningful improvements in services and workforce stability. But without this step, those conversations become significantly more limited.

From the perspective of the workforce I represent, this is not an abstract policy discussion. It is directly connected to whether Rhode Island can maintain a stable, effective system of care for its most vulnerable residents.

SEIU Local 580 strongly supports S2238 and respectfully urges the Committee to move this legislation forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

[YOUR NAME]

[Union Officer Title], SEIU Local 580

[Your Title], [Agency/Workplace]