



★ WORKING FAMILIES POWER ★

Representative Joseph Solomon, Jr., Chair  
House Corporations Committee

March 20, 2025

**Support for H-5161, H-5018, H-5068, H-5245, and H-5818**

Chair Solomon and Members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Power writes in strong support of H-5161, H-5018, H-5068, H-5245, and H-5818. Working Families Power advocates for policies that promote economic justice and allow all people to meet their basic needs and live with dignity, which these bills would help promote.

H-5161 and H-5018 from Rep. Cotter would help reign in the price gouging practices that we currently see from utility corporations in Rhode Island. At a time when Rhode Islanders are struggling to pay skyrocketing utility bills, we should have regulations in place to ensure their costs are not being driven by the motivation for ballooning profits from utilities with a natural monopoly in the state. Creating a study commission to explore the creation of publicly owned gas and electric utilities—a model that exists in other states—is a common sense next step for the legislature to take.

H-5068 and H-5245 from Rep. Cruz and Rep. Slater would create important utility connection protection programs for low-income residents and Rhode Islanders who are struggling with severe illness. No one should have to worry about their gas and electricity being cut off because they have been in the hospital or they have lost their job.

And H-5818 from Rep. Handy would prevent utilities from using ratepayer funds to pay for lobbying, paying tax penalties, or corporate travel expenses—an important step Rhode Island can take to reduce unnecessary costs that are passed on to residents. Connecticut recently passed similar legislation and saw \$10 million in savings in the first year. We hope the committee will move forward with this legislation so that it can be enacted into law.

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler

Progressive Governance Director  
Rhode Island Working Families Power