

April 30, 2024

House Finance Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Support for H 7036

Dear Honorable Chairman Abney,

I am writing in support of H 7036, The Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act. I teach a class called Participatory Budgeting at Central Falls School, which is a blend of civics education and financial literacy. Participatory Budgeting happens around the world, and gives community members, in this case Central Falls students, direct decision making power over how funds get spent in their community.

I have seen first hand how the students who take the Participatory Budgeting class have become more comfortable with public speaking and advocating for themselves and their fellow community members. They understand local and state government and how the budgets are allocated, and become excited to take an active part in decision making in their community. These are the critical skills that are developed through hands-on civics education that is innovative and cutting edge.

We need new and interesting ways to engage students in civic learning, that is why this legislation that will create a funding stream for professional development and innovative curriculum is so important. Passing this legislation to allocate a dedicated funding stream to develop civics education will send a critical message that we, as a state, care about civics education, care about the strength of our democracy, and care about the future for our young people.

In closing, please pass H 7036. Strong civics education is one of the most valuable tools we can give our young people.

Sincerely,

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