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April 30, 2024
Hon. Marvin Abney, Chair
And members of the House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence RI, 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of H 7036 – RELATING TO EDUCATION- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

United Way of Rhode Island is writing in support of **House Bill 7036 – The Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act**, legislation allocating funds to enhance civics education in Rhode Island. A priority of the United Way is to provide Rhode Islanders equitable access to voting opportunities and other civic engagements. By empowering students with a robust civics' curriculum, we equip future decision makers with the knowledge and critical thinking skills essential for active citizenship. This investment ensures that the youth not only understand their civic duties but also fosters diverse perspectives, cultivating a community of informed and engaged individuals ready to contribute positively to society.

With increased funding for civics education, Rhode Island's youth will delve into practical experiences that go beyond textbook learning. Through hands-on engagement, students will develop the skills to analyze societal issues critically. This early exposure to the civics process will empower them to actively participate in community initiatives, fostering a sense of responsibility and commitment to positive change. By instilling a deep understanding of how government functions and the impact individuals can have, these students will grow into informed citizens who are not just aware of their civic duties but are also equipped to proactively contribute to the betterment of their community and the state as a whole.

United Way of Rhode Island encourages the committee to consider **House Bill 7036** and the investment to develop civically engaged students to help build a stronger Rhode Islander.

Thank you for your consideration,
Elijah McLean
United Way of Rhode Island

