



Public Testimony
Senate Finance Committee
Re: RI Earned Income Tax Credit and Minimum Wage
Senate Bill 2349
March 8, 2016

Submitted by The Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty

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Good afternoon. My name is Emily Jones and I'm speaking on behalf of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, a coalition of diverse religious communities and advocacy partners throughout the state who have come together to fight poverty.

I am testifying today to voice our organization's strong support for S2349 which would increase the Rhode Island Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to thirty-five per cent of the federal credit.

14.3 per cent of Rhode Islanders are living on incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold and many more teetering on the edge of poverty. Again, I want to emphasize: as people of faith, this is simply unacceptable to us.

We testified earlier today on the reasons why we support an increase to the RI EITC. As we discussed when speaking in support of both the Governor's budget proposal and Senate Bill 2156, we believe that the RI EITC has a significant impact on struggling working families. It has an especially strong positive impact on children living in poverty or on the edge of poverty. It also boosts our local economy as the dollars returned through the RI EITC circulate in our communities. This impact is not limited to just one or two communities, but stretches across the state.

As families struggle to make ends meet, each additional percentage point written into law has an impact. Increasing the RI EITC to a fully-refundable 35% would have the strongest impact of all the RI EITC proposals you are currently considering.

As you consider the proposals before you, we would encourage you to increase the Rhode Island Earned Income Tax Credit to thirty-five percent of the federal credit.

Thank you for your time and for your public service.