



The Rhode Island State
Council of Churches

Social Justice Legislative Campaign

PART 2: REVENUE REFORM

Faith-Based Witness Communications

EMAIL

LETTER

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

IN-PERSON TESTIMONY

Send an
email to:

Your Senator

President of
the Senate

Send an
email to:

Your
Representative

Speaker of the
House

When to
send an
email:

The Rhode Island General
Assembly is in session
each year from January
till June.

When to
send an
email:

When bill is filed.
(Early in the session.)

When a bill is heard in
committee.

In May or June, if bill is
not called to the floor.

Format

For the Senate Bill
Subject line should read:
“In favor of Bill S 2238.”

Body of the e-mail should be two or three sentences.

If you have a relationship with the legislator, it could be longer.

Format

For the House Bill
Subject line should read:
“In favor of bill H 7313”

Body of the e-mail should be two or three sentences.

If you have a relationship with the legislator, it could be longer.

Sample Email

Subject: In favor of S 2238

Dear Senator (Your Senator),

I am a [your town] resident and a constituent. I am writing in favor of the “Tax Fairness Act” (S 2238). The bill increases the tax on Rhode Islanders with highest incomes. It has the effect of making the current tax formula more proportional by asking more from the very wealthy among us. I encourage passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

Email to your Representative when your Representative is a co-sponsor of bill H 7313

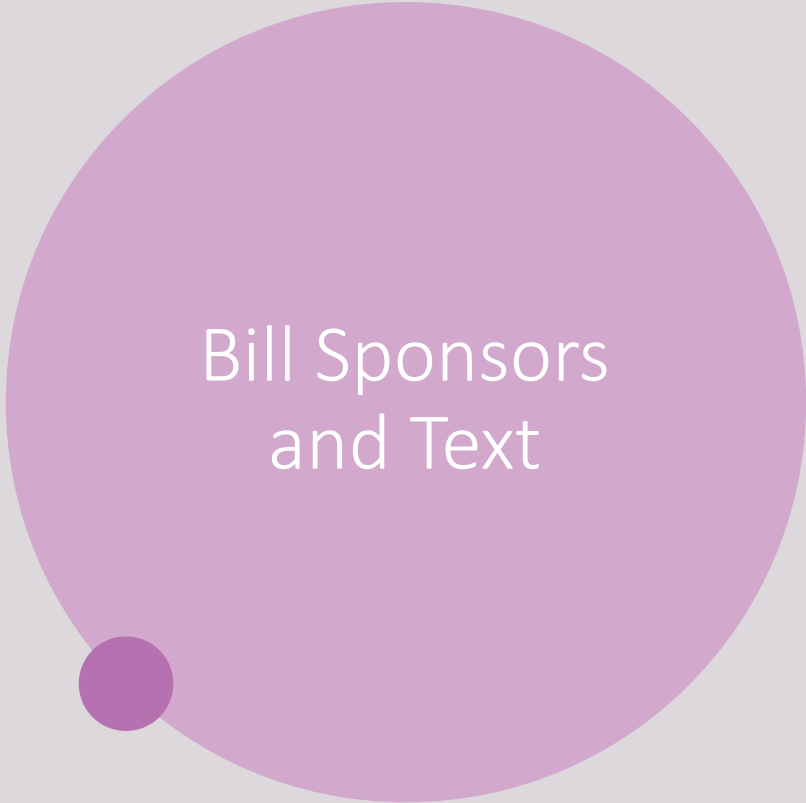
Subject: In favor of H 7313

Dear Representative (Your Representative),

Thank you for co-sponsoring the “Tax Fairness Act (7313)

I am a [your town] resident and a constituent. As you know, the bill increases the tax on Rhode Islanders with highest incomes. It has the effect of making the current tax formula more proportional by asking more from the very wealthy among us. I encourage passage of this bill.

Respectfully,



Bill Sponsors and Text

Representatives sponsoring H 7313, “Health Care Data Privacy Act.”

The bill sponsors along with the bill text can be found on the RI Legislature's website:

<https://status.rilegislature.gov/>

Communication
to
Representatives

Representatives sponsoring H 7313

“Tax Fairness Act”

Representatives: Alzate, Fogarty, Potter, Giraldo, Donovan, Spears, J Lombardi, Diaz, Cotter, Kazarian

If your Representative, is a bill sponsor, thank them.

If they are not a bill sponsor, encourage them to support and pass the bill.

Communication
to
Senators

Senators sponsoring S 2238
“Tax Fairness Act”

Senators Murray, Lawson, Ciccone,
DiMario, Lauria, Bissaillon, Acosta, Gu,
Burke, McKenney,

If your senator is a bill sponsor, thank
them.

If your senator is not a bill sponsor,
encourage them to support and pass
the bill.

Letter Writing Format

If you can, use Congregational Stationery

Put in Subject line: Re: Passage of S 2238

Body:

Introduction (who you are).

Three or four sentences with a moral/religious argument.

Or

Three or four sentences with a personal story.

Or

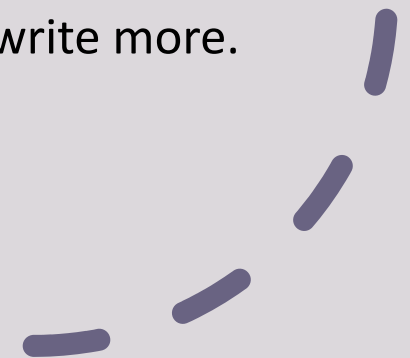
If your legislator knows you, you could write more.

Ask Legislator to support the bill.

Your name

Title

. Rhode Island State Council of Churches



Letter of Support

Sample

Re: Support for S 2238

Dear Senator [Last Name],

I am a resident of (Your Town) and a constituent. I am writing to urge your support for Senator Murray's Tax Fairness Act (2238).

The bill increases the tax on Rhode Islanders with highest incomes. It has the effect of making the current tax formula more proportional by asking more from the very wealthy among us. The bill creates a 3% surtax on taxable incomes above \$640,000.00/year.

The increase in funds will help in many ways. We know that the federal government has substantially cut assistance in several areas, including SNAP benefits and Medicaid funding. Many families are struggling with increased health insurance costs and rising food prices.

As a member of a church community that operates a food pantry, I am well aware that there are many families struggling with food insecurity. If we do nothing, the price of our inaction will be paid by people in need.

How we care for the neediest in our community is a moral question that we cannot avoid answering. When we care for those who are in need we express the deepest truth of who we are. The moral calculation we face is not whether we can afford to feed our children but whether we can afford not to.

Thank you for your considerate attention to this important matter. I urge you to support tax fairness in Rhode Island.

Grace and peace,

Rev. [Your Name]

[Church Name]

[City, State]

Committee Hearing

Bills are first sent to Committee for a hearing.

The Website RIlegislature.gov has a great deal of information including who is on the Committee.

S 2238 & H 7313 will be heard in the Finance Committees of each Chamber.

Committee Hearing Intel

Representative Alzate, and Diaz, are members of the House Finance Committee & are Sponsors of bill H 7313.

The Senate President (Lawson), Majority Leader (Ciccone), and Senators DiMario & Acosta are on the Senate Finance Committee & are Co-sponsors of the bill S 2238.

Written Testimony

Written testimony may be submitted to the Committee holding the hearing. It should be submitted the Clerk of the Committee ahead of the time of the hearing or hand delivered at the time of the Committee hearing.

Instruction on submission is listed on the Committee agenda that is posted on the RI legislature website Rilegislature.gov The website has a great deal of information including who is on the Committee, a copy of the bill, and the bill sponsors.

In Person Testimony

At the hearing, bill sponsors are invited to speak first.

General officers are next if they are co-sponsoring the bill. Officers include the Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General and Treasurer.

Sometimes experts in the field are invited to testify.

General public speakers are next and are typically limited to two or three minutes. The limit is often strictly held. A speaker can be cut off by the Chair.

In Person Testimony Process

There are sign in sheets available before the hearing begins.

After your testimony is completed, Senators and Representatives may ask you questions.

Senate rules allow Senators to make a comment instead of asking a question. You cannot reply, unless the Chair allows it.

Committee Hearing

All bills that are heard
are held for further
study.

Committee members do
not vote on the bill on
the day of the hearing.

In-person Special Events

Rally – Press Event

RISCC Lobby Day

In-person chat on House/Senate Floor

Constituent Meeting

Rally & Press Event

Special Events are often held in conjunction with other groups who share our interest.

Showing up at the State House for a Rally or Press Event is an easy way to demonstrate support.

How do I find my State Senator and Representative?

Go to Secretary of State's
Website: <https://www.sos.ri.gov>

Click on **Elections and voting**

Click on **Find your local officials**

Click on **Fill in your residence information**

Step 1: Enter your residence zip code.

Step 2: Select your city/town from the
dropdown list.

Step 3: Enter your street number.

Step 4: Name of your street.

Your Public Officials will be displayed.

How do I find a copy of a bill?

Go to RI State Legislature Website:
<https://www.rilegislature.gov>

Click on **Bills and Laws** (Top of Page)

Click on **Bill Status/History** (This will also give you information about where the bill is in the legislative process.)

Click on **Bill Text**

Thank you!

For more information, please visit the
Council of Churches Website:

<https://www.councilofchurchesri.org>

For questions about the Tax Fairness
Bill, please email:

Rev. Eugene Dyszlewski

socialjustice@councilofchurchesri.org