



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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**Testimony Re: H-7235 Regarding Education – All Students Count Act of 2016**

**House Finance Committee**

**April 28, 2016**

**Stephanie Geller, Senior Policy Analyst**

We would like to voice our support for House Bill 7235, the *All Students Count Act of 2016*, which would improve the quality of the data collected and reported on Asian students in Rhode Island.

The Asian population in Rhode Island is fast growing and quite diverse in terms of ethnic origin, language spoken, and educational needs and outcomes. During the 2015-2016 school year, there were 4,585 Asian students enrolled in grades Pre-K through 12 in Rhode Island, making up 3% of the student population. During the 2014-2015 school year, English-Language Learner students in Rhode Island public schools spoke 90 different languages, and three of the ten most commonly spoken languages were Chinese, Khmer/Cambodian, and Laotian.

Having additional detail on the educational experiences, needs, and outcomes of Asian students and how these experiences, needs, and outcomes differ by subgroup would allow decision makers to better address the educational needs of Asian students and develop effective policies to support these students and improve their outcomes. The most recent data on high school graduation rates show that Asian students had the highest four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2015 with 89% of Asian students in Rhode Island graduating within four years, higher than the rate for all students of 83%. Similarly, results for the 2015 *PARCC* show that 47% of Asian third-grade students in Rhode Island met expectations in English Language Arts, about the same rate as for White students (48%), but much higher than Black (22%), Hispanic (18%), and Native American (17%) students.

While data in the aggregate suggest that Asian students are performing well, we hear anecdotally that outcomes differ substantially by Asian subgroup, with Asian students from groups that have lived in the United States for longer and have higher incomes doing much better than newer-arrived and lower-income Asian subgroups. This bill would allow us to collect more detailed and better data that would help to target interventions and improve proficiency and outcomes for these subgroups.

There may be some challenges associated with reporting data on small subgroups (e.g., Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese students) due to the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE's) restrictions on reporting data for groups that are smaller than ten students (to protect the confidentiality and identity of these students); however, we understand that RIDE is having productive conversations with several groups to address confidentiality concerns and are confident that this legislation can be modified to address these concerns.

Once these changes are made, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would encourage you to pass this bill.