

## Lisa Cataldi

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**From:** Miranda Oakley <mirandaleeoakley@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 12, 2024 5:55 PM  
**To:** House Education Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony for bill H 7561

Dear committee,

My name is Miranda Oakley. I am a South Kingstown resident who is completely blind. I want to share with you why I support bill H 7561 and why I believe you should take action now to pass this important bill. Growing up I split my time between public school and a school for the blind. During my time in Rhode Island public school I participated in adapted physical education, APE. Enrollment for students wishing to help students with disabilities is low because students struggle to ensure they meet all the requirements necessary for graduation. I understand the struggle of not receiving credit for all your classes and the impact this can have on mental health. When I switched to a school for the blind, because my public school could no longer provide for me, I ended up completing South Kingstown requirements as well as the requirements for my new school.

Passing H 7561 opens the door to greater opportunity extending beyond Rhode Island. H 7561 benefits students with and without disabilities. This bill allows Rhode Island to serve as a model for enriching students lives throughout Rhode Island, as well as other neighboring states. Giving students the option to receive credit for joining students with disabilities in APE goes beyond the importance of physical education. Giving students credit for this class improves mental health because they don't have to worry about taking another gym class ontop of this one. Passing H 7561 will improve skills for students with and without disabilities such as critical thinking, mental health for all students, communication and social skills. This is why I am asking you to take action now to pass bill H 7561.