

Good afternoon,

My name is Juliana and I am a senior at Classical High School. I am also a student advocate at Young Voices. I am writing today in SUPPORT of House Bill #7726, If passed, this act will require public school districts and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to publicly announce a proposal for closure, merger, or phase-out of a public school. In addition, it requires a public forum where the proposed closure can be discussed openly and sets a timeline for final decision-making after community engagement, ensuring transparency and accountability.

A high school is a community for high school students, their families, the faculty, and staff. As we saw with 360, a public forum between the community and RIDE came together only once a decision had already been made. How should we as students be expected to react when we are the last to know that our school community is being shut down? H7726 will guarantee that we as stakeholders in our education have a voice in the potential impact all future decisions will have on the community.

Removing the physical buildings will not solve the deterioration of the education system. Improving the quality of teaching, the selection of subjects taught, and how classes are distributed throughout the day will have a far better outcome for students and staff alike compared to remodeling the location where learning takes place. Delaying the implementation of solutions that attack the root of the problem will only leave us with a generation of under-resourced students. The transparent process proposed in this bill will allow us as a community to help resolve the difficulties that students and families are facing in schools.

I am asking you and your colleagues in the House to PASS H7726. We are relying on you to do the right thing and ensure that your constituents are heard. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Juliana Pazos
Providence, RI