



To: House Committee on Education
From: Erich Haslehurst, National Education Association Rhode Island
Date: March 4, 2025
Re: H5339 – RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the National Education Association Rhode Island and our 12,000 members to express our support of H5339, introduced by Representative O'Brien, and also some concern.

We are grateful for the ongoing efforts of the legislature in addressing the teacher shortage that has been prevalent in recent years. It is imperative that we continue these actions moving forward. However, it is equally important that we also focus on addressing the root causes of this shortage. One of the key issues that needs to be tackled is the mental health and behavioral challenges faced by our students. It is crucial that we find effective and constructive ways to support our students in these areas, not only for their benefit but also to ensure that our teachers can maximize their instructional time in the classroom. Investing in mental health professionals, particularly social workers, within our schools is essential.

Furthermore, improvements to the pension system are necessary to provide teachers with the stability and security they need to plan for their futures. While there is no single solution to the teacher shortage, we believe that collectively addressing these issues will help to make the teaching profession more attractive once again.

We are eager to collaborate with this committee and the legislature to implement these solutions and make a positive impact on our education system.

Sincerely,

Erich Haslehurst
National Education Association Rhode Island