

From: Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.
Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Lisa Cataldi
Subject: H-6156

Please include this as written testimony. thanks!

PRESS RELEASE

Rep. Casimiro ‘appalled’ with foster children data in Kids Count Factbook

STATE HOUSE – Rep. Julie A. Casimiro is “appalled” by the data concerning foster children graduation rates in Rhode Island’s schools. Kids Count recently released its 2025 factbook and it shows that foster children are significantly lagging behind all other children in Rhode Island’s education system.

“Only 43 percent of Rhode Island students in foster care graduate in four years. That is the simple and appalling fact illustrated by the data in the 2025 Kids Count Factbook. Students experiencing homelessness graduate at a rate of 59 percent and students receiving special education services graduate at a rate of 65 percent. With these three subgroups representing the lower-end of Rhode Island graduation rates, why are our foster kids doing so much worse than any other type of Rhode Island student?

“The truth of the matter is that the Rhode Island Department of Education and our local districts are drastically failing some of our state’s most vulnerable children, and year after year, our foster kids are being ignored and forgotten. The General Assembly has passed numerous reforms over the past several years, many of which I introduced, that aimed to support our children in foster care and close this unacceptable educational gap, yet as the data shows, this gap continues to exist at best, and at worst, it’s growing.

“Nationally, foster children’s graduation rates are improving and real progress is being made, but here in Rhode Island, the smallest state in the country, we can’t get our act together to help these vulnerable kids who have already experienced so much trauma and hurt during their short time being alive.

“The many studies, data points and anecdotal evidence is clear that our educational leaders are failing our kids in foster care, and the Kids Count Factbook is just the latest piece of evidence that these kids are being ignored and swept under the rug. We are disregarding our sacred responsibility to care for, support and give our foster kids the best possible chance to grow into healthy and successful adults. Rhode Island’s educational system needs to wake up and do the right thing before more of our foster children become tragic statistics in next year’s factbook,” said Representative Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter).

Julie A. Casimiro
Representative D-31 (North Kingstown/Exeter)

Deputy Majority Leader
First Vice-Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight
Chairwoman, Oversight Subcommittee on Children and Families
Committee on Judiciary
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Committee on Education