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Representative Joseph M. McNamara
Rhode Island State House
RI House Education Committee Chairman
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

April 22, 2025

Dear Representative Joseph M. McNamara,

I would like to thank the committee for meeting to discuss the House Resolution Bill H6156, *Creating a Special Legislative Commission to Study Educational Outcomes for Children in State Care*, submitted by Representatives Casimiro and Noret. This is a complex issue requiring information from all those who provide services for children in state care.

I would like to request that the bill be amended to include an additional member, the Executive Director of the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities or designee.

The Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities is Rhode Island's federally designated University Center on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) with a mission to promote membership for all in school, work and the community. The Sherlock Center has successfully implemented the Educational Surrogate Parent Program since 2003. Each year, the program supports approximately 18% of children in the care and custody of RI Department of Youth and Families (DCYF). The program has consistently met or exceeded the goals set by the state consent decree to provide services to students with disabilities in the care and custody of DCYF. Graduation rates for students supported by this program have consistently exceeded 85%, and the majority of students transition from high school into higher education programs, transition programs and/or into employment and independent living situations.

This experience positions us to provide the best information related to how Educational Surrogate Parent services are provided children in state care who have disabilities and are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Sherlock Center will be able to add to the commission's study by providing information regarding how Educational Surrogate Parent Program is structured, receives referrals and provides services.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Amy Grattan, PhD

Executive Director, Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College

Promoting membership for all in school, work and community

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