



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Joseph McNamara  
Chair, House Education Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7417

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of NEARI, we write in support of H 7415, legislation that establishes a temporary pause on the creation or expansion of charter schools for the 26–27, 27–28, and 28–29 school years.

At the outset, it is important to be clear that our union is not categorically opposed to charter schools. Charter schools are part of Rhode Island's public education landscape, and this legislation does not impact them. However, the question before the committee is not whether charter schools should exist, but whether this is the appropriate moment for additional expansion.

Rhode Island is on the cusp of undertaking one of the most significant education policy initiatives in the past two decades: the comprehensive reworking of the state's education funding formula based on the recommendations of the Rhode Island Foundation's Blue Ribbon Commission on Education Funding. The Legislature, the Department of Education, school districts, educators, and community stakeholders will soon be engaged in a complex and consequential process to ensure that Rhode Island's funding system more accurately reflects student needs and provides sustainable support for all public schools.

The recommendations and modeling developed by the Blue Ribbon Commission are built upon the current structure and balance of LEA's and charter schools across the state. The fiscal assumptions, enrollment projections, and resource allocations within that report reflect the system as it exists today.

Allowing the creation or expansion of additional charter schools during this period would significantly complicate that work. New charters would shift enrollment patterns, redistribute public education funding, and alter the assumptions that underpin the Commission's analysis. In doing so, they could undermine the careful planning and consensus-building that the state is about to undertake.

H 7415 provides a prudent and measured solution. By temporarily pausing the approval of new charter schools or expansions, the legislation gives Rhode Island the necessary stability to complete the work of modernizing its education funding formula. Once that process is complete and the state has established a new, equitable funding framework, policymakers will be in a far stronger position to evaluate the appropriate role and scale of charter schools moving forward.

This bill does not eliminate charter schools, nor does it permanently restrict innovation or choice. Instead, it recognizes that RI's education system is entering a period of major structural reform that requires stability, careful planning, and alignment between funding policy and school governance.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill 7415.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini".

Alexander Lucini  
Government Relations Director, NEARI