



**Testimony in Support of HB7415**

**March 10, 2026**

**TO:** House Education Committee

My name is Andrew MacMannis, I am the Chief of External Affairs for Collective Action for Education. As both an organization, and as a person, I deeply believe that all children deserve access to a great public school, and all families deserve the choice to seek that opportunity for their children. I stand in firm opposition to House Bill 7415.

This is a bill that, as written, could mislead someone to believe that there has been a sudden increase in the approval of new charter schools in the state. In fact, in the last ten years, there have only been two final approvals, plus De La Comunidad Bilingual Charter School which is currently in a state of preliminary approval for launch in the school year 2027-28. Overall, there has been a net growth of just two new charters over ten years. This is not a surge of new charter public schools, this is a result of a careful and thoughtful process.

This is due to the Rhode Island Department of Education holding an authorization process that is seen nationally as a gold standard. According to the 2025 CREDO report out of Stanford University, RIDE's 2017 updates to their charter accountability procedures both simplified the conditions for schools to be rated and reduced uncertainty in how charter public schools were assessed.

Applications for new charter public school seats are posted publicly online, and RIDE invites local impact analyses from the public. Each applicant also undergoes a 60+ day public comment process that includes hearings in the communities where the school would be located and from which it is expected to draw students. The process is abundantly transparent for the



applications that make it to the point of being posted online. What is not seen are the dozens of applications that are phased out by RIDE before they enter public conversation. This authorization process is about as tough as it gets.

What we need to do here today is listen to the families and students— the same families and students who are submitting over 30,000 applications for under 3,000 seats.

These are families and students who are seeking opportunities, in a way no different than families and students pursuing choice through career and technical education— public education dollars used for public school education. We don't question the families and students who seek private schools or homeschools. These are people also seeking choice, but face little-to-no-scrutiny— nothing compared to the level of constant defense-of-existence that charter school families and students find themselves in. The core difference between charter public schools and these other options is that statewide, charter public schools serve 75% students of color, and 63% students receiving free and reduced-priced lunch.

If we actually want to discuss funding inequities, or funding solutions, we should shift gears and dive into the suggestions and recommendations in the Rhode Island Foundation's Blue Ribbon Commission report.

If we want to ensure a tough authorization process, we should trust the Rhode Island Department of Education. They already have it.

If we want to ensure we are supporting families and students, we will not ignore their voice, and will respect their choices. Then oppose this moratorium.