

## Lisa Cataldi

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**From:** Katelyn Berard <berardk@psdri.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 7, 2026 4:48 PM  
**To:** House Education Committee  
**Subject:** H 7415 and H 8131

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I am a teacher in the Pawtucket School Department and have been teaching for 9 years. I would like to discuss two bills that you will be discussing. The first bill is H 7415 - Charter moratorium/ cap reduction and the second bill is H 8131 - Commission to study charter funding and costs.

The Pawtucket School Department (PSD) is unfortunately facing a deficit in our budget and despite all we have done, we are looking at the real possibility of having to close schools and lay off teachers due to low enrollment. Charter schools are one of the biggest challenges we are currently facing. We are sending over \$7 million dollars for tuition for other schools. If we were able to keep our students in the district and not have charter schools as an option, we would be able to put that money directly back into PSD and it would tremendously help with our budget. It would help increase enrollment which would keep/increase the amount of teachers we have/need, and it would help fill our beautiful new school buildings that are eager for more students.

Rhode Island is managing almost 64 independent public school districts due to charter schools. That seems incredibly and unnecessarily high for the smallest state. We are sending millions of Rhode Island taxpayers dollars to these charter corporations that are out of state. When there are almost 64 different school districts we are also talking about 64 superintendents, 64 central offices, and 64 curriculums. Managing the resources, money, and expectations of these public schools seems impossible.

With how much money we are sending to these charter school corporations you would expect we would know how they are spending our taxpayers money. Unlike other government agencies, they do not have to be transparent with how they are spending our money. Not only is there little to no transparency, there is also little to no accountability. Who is making sure they are spending the money correctly?

As a Rhode Island taxpayer and a PSD educator I do not want to see any more charter schools in Rhode Island. They are not performing better than us, they do not have any financial transparency/accountability, and the amount of students we could get back from charter schools would have a tremendous impact on not only our school district but others.

Thank you for your time and attention to this,

Katelyn Berard