Testimony in Opposition

HB7415 Establishment of Public Charter Schools

March 10, 2026

On behalf of the Latino Policy Institute, we respectfully oppose H 7415, which would create limitations on the number of public charter schools in the state. Across Rhode Island, many families—particularly those in historically underserved and lower-income communities—are actively seeking high-quality educational opportunities for their children. For some families, charter schools represent an important option when they feel the traditional system is not meeting their child's needs. A blanket moratorium on new charter school approvals would eliminate a pathway many parents seek and limit educational opportunities at a time when families are asking for more options, not fewer.

This legislation would also disrupt Rhode Island's established governance structure for charter school oversight. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is charged with evaluating charter school proposals through a rigorous review process that assesses academic quality, financial sustainability, and community impact. Limiting RIDE's authority through a legislative moratorium risks politicizing decisions that are currently made through a structured, evidence-based process.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the broader concerns about how charter school growth may affect traditional public school districts. However, those concerns should be addressed directly through policy solutions that strengthen the education system as a whole. This includes addressing gaps in Rhode Island's education funding formula, ensuring equitable distribution of resources across communities, and confronting broader economic and income inequities that shape educational outcomes.

Restricting charter school approvals does not resolve these structural challenges. Instead, it limits opportunities for families who are seeking alternatives while leaving the underlying issues unaddressed.

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