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From: Patrick Shelton <pshelton32@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 11:01 PM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: Letter in STRONG Support for H7415

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To: Chairperson McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee

From: Patrick Shelton, 5th-Grade Teacher, Reservoir Ave Elementary School

Date: March 10, 2026

Testimony in STRICT SUPPORT of H7415 – Charter School Moratorium

To the members of the House Committee on Education, my name is Patrick Shelton. I have been a teacher in Providence for 13 years, and I currently teach at Reservoir Ave Elementary.

I've stood before you many times to fight for the schools in Providence. I care deeply about my students' success and the district's success. I'm here today because our traditional public districts are at a breaking point. Principals and superintendents across the state are scrambling to close budget deficits largely due to spending on charter school enrollment. At Reservoir Ave, for example, we have **one** special education teacher for our entire school. As charter expansion drains our budget, his caseload grows while our resources shrink.

H7415 provides a necessary 'emergency brake' through a moratorium, but it also does something more important: it lowers the state cap from 35 to 25. This isn't just a number; it's a choice to prioritize the neighborhood schools that we are currently investing hundreds of millions of dollars in over the unchecked growth of a parallel school system.

As elected representatives, your primary mandate is to protect the institutions that serve *all* children. Traditional public schools are governed by public-facing, elected school boards that give parents a seat at the table. In contrast, many charters are governed by opaque, often out-of-state boards that are insulated from the very taxpayers who fund them.

A moratorium stops the bleeding. Lowering the cap on charter schools in the state will finally help us begin to heal. Public school districts across the state are hurting. Elected officials across the state are suing to prevent further charter school expansion in their cities. For my students at Reservoir Ave and the families of students in traditional public schools across the state, I urge you to pass H7415.

Thank you.

-Patrick Shelton