

Subject: H 7417 Save Rhode Island School Libraries Act

March 10, 2026

Dear Education Committee Members & Sponsors of H7417:

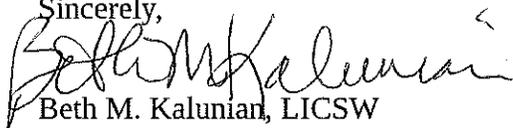
I was recently taken aback (to say the least) when I learned that our Providence Schools' librarian positions would be cut to part-time and am writing to you as a school social worker, educator, and long time child advocate to strongly urge you to maintain funding for our school libraries and full-time certified librarian positions.

The school library is not just a repository of books; it is a critical hub for student success. Research consistently shows that schools with well-supported libraries and certified staff have better-performing students. Our school librarian (high school) acts as a vital educator, teaching crucial information literacy skills that help students navigate a 21st century high-tech, information-rich world. Our school librarian is an avid supporter of students and goes above and beyond to foster a love of reading and learning. She assists students with obtaining information and locating resources for projects, researching colleges, recommending and locating books that suit student interests, and she provides them with a safe, calm, supportive space to complete their work when needed. The school librarian also furthers reading interest by holding a book giveaway each year. In addition, our school librarian is instrumental in assisting teachers and other school staff in lesson planning, locating resources, instructing them in the areas of research and information literacy, and so forth.

Furthermore, the library ensures equity by providing ALL students with access to books, technology, and a safe, welcoming space for independent learning and discovery. Cutting these resources disproportionately affects our Providence students, many of whom do not have access to these materials at home.

I cannot imagine any of our schools thriving without a dedicated, full-time librarian on hand to educate and assist our precious students and respectfully request that you prioritize student learning by keeping our school libraries funded and staffed full-time.

Sincerely,



Beth M. Kalunian, LICSW

School Social Worker, Providence Schools