



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara, Chairman
House Education Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 7906, An Act Relating to Education – Establishment of Charter Public Schools

Dear Chairman McNamara:

On behalf of our Mayoral Academies, we would like to take this opportunity to express our opposition to House Bill 7906, which would require new and renewing charter schools to include union neutrality clauses in their charters.

As school leaders, we are concerned with the potential impacts H7906 and several other bills introduced this session that will have detrimental impacts to our learning environment and workplace culture. As you are aware, we primarily serve students and families in urban core communities who may not have the ability to afford private or parochial schools if their traditional public schools are not meeting their educational needs.

Among the concerns we have with this particular piece of legislation are the following:

- Serious First Amendment issues are presented by stifling the ability of principals, administrators, and teachers to have open conversations about unionization in their schools.
- Removing the ability of school employees to cast individual secret ballots and instead instituting a majority card check process.
- Allowing union leaders unfettered access to school facilities and grounds. This is particularly concerning given the importance of security and ensuring that our students, teachers, and administrators are safe during the school day.

Recently, teachers at several charter public schools have made the decision to unionize. Likely, teachers make these decisions for their own reasons and without undue influence. These decisions are made under the laws in place today, which are already extremely restrictive for employers and supportive of the rights of organized labor. There is no need to further swing the balance of power and take away the choice that teachers have today on whether to unionize.

Further, it is important to note that only one state, Illinois, has enacted such legislation. This law was immediately challenged and is currently pending in an Illinois court where the judge recently

acknowledged the law could have First Amendment implications. The Illinois case will take time to resolve and could result in further appeals.

As school leaders, we believe improving educational outcomes should be the focus of students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Enacting this legislation will only serve to distract from the work being done to provide students with the skills needed to become our leaders of tomorrow.

The success of charter public schools is seen in the demand for seats far outweighing the availability across the state. In the most recent enrollment cycle, Rhode Island families submitted nearly 30,000 charter school applications for roughly 2,500 available seats statewide, meaning only about 1 in 12 students received a seat through the lottery.

For more than 25 years, charter public schools have served the needs of kids and families across our state. Our schools consistently outperform traditional public schools in the communities we serve. We stand ready to continue to provide high-quality educational options for families.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position on H7906 and a little about the impact charter public schools have on improving the education of our state's children.

Sincerely,



Sarah Anderson
CEO, Blackstone Valley Prep



Tom McDermott
Executive Director, Rhode Island Achievement
First



Owen Stearns
CEO, Excel Academy

cc: House Education Committee members

Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel, Office of House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi