

Anthony Melillo, Cranston School Committee, City Wide

Anthony Melillo

Vice Chairman

Cranston School Committee

Cranston, Rhode Island

March 9, 2026

Dear Members of the Rhode Island General Assembly,

I write in strong support of H 7415 and H 8131, two important pieces of legislation that address Rhode Island's charter school funding system and the need for a thoughtful review of charter school expansion.

As Vice Chairman of the Cranston School Committee, I see firsthand the financial pressures facing our public school districts. Over the past decade, the number of charter schools in Rhode Island has grown significantly, yet the education funding formula has not been comprehensively reviewed since 2010. During this time, the fiscal impact on local school districts has increased, often without a full understanding of the long-term consequences for municipal budgets, educational programs, and the services we provide to students.

H 7415, which would place a temporary pause on the approval or expansion of charter schools for three school years (2026–2029), provides the state with the necessary time to evaluate how continued expansion affects local school districts. This pause is not about limiting opportunity; rather, it is about ensuring that policy decisions are made with a full understanding of their financial and educational impact on communities like Cranston.

Equally important is H 8131, which would create a Special Legislative Commission to study Rhode Island's charter school funding formula and its broader fiscal implications. Bringing

Anthony Melillo, Cranston School Committee, City Wide

together educators, municipal leaders, legislators, and charter representatives will allow for a comprehensive and collaborative review of a system that has not kept pace with the evolving educational landscape.

For cities and towns across Rhode Island, including Cranston, these measures could provide much-needed financial stability while policymakers carefully examine the current funding model. Our goal should always be to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education while maintaining fiscal responsibility for our taxpayers.

Public education is one of the most important investments we make in our communities. These bills represent a responsible step toward ensuring that Rhode Island's education policies are fair, transparent, and sustainable for the future.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the students and families of Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

Anthony Melillo

Anthony Melillo

Vice Chairman

Cranston School Committee