

RI House Education Committee Hearing
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Support: H 7415 & HJR 8131
Reject: H 7615

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Larissa Guido Swenson. I was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, and I came to the United States as an adult with a bachelor's degree in World Languages Education.

For several years, I worked in public education in Rhode Island supporting multilingual learners. During my Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in World Languages Education, I completed both my practicum and student teaching in Rhode Island public schools. Today, I continue working in the field of education, where I support multilingual learners in a different way. In my work, I meet many students who dream of becoming teachers in the same communities where they grew up. I also meet adults who came to Rhode Island with valuable language skills and educational backgrounds and want to give back by teaching and supporting the next generation of students.

Many of these individuals attended public schools where they had teachers who spoke their language, understood their culture, and supported them through their challenges. Those public schools were places where they felt seen, understood, and supported, and those experiences inspired them to pursue careers in education.

I strongly believe that public school education is the best fit for our students in Rhode Island because public schools serve everyone and are deeply connected to the communities they represent.

However, I have also seen the strain that charter school expansion can place on public school districts. When funding is diverted away from district schools, it becomes harder for those schools to maintain programs that support multilingual learners and other students who need additional resources. These are often the same students whose families rely most on strong neighborhood public schools.

Public schools serve all students, including multilingual learners who often need specialized support, language development, and stable learning environments. When funding and resources are diverted away from public schools, districts may struggle to provide the support these students need.

For this reason, I support H 7415, which would pause charter school expansion so the state can better evaluate the impact on our public schools. I also support HJR 8131, which would examine how charter school funding affects district schools and help ensure that funding decisions are fair and transparent.

I respectfully oppose H 7615, which proposes the creation of all-charter school districts. I believe our priority should be strengthening the public schools that serve the majority of Rhode Island students.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to education in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,
Larissa Guido Swenson, MAT

Resident of Riverside Rhode Island

House District 66