



**March 16, 2026**

**House Education Committee**

**Rhode Island State House Providence, RI 02903**

**Testimony in Support of H 7729 An Act Relating to Education**

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Diana Garlington, and I serve as a Policy Program Officer at United Way of Rhode Island. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill No. 7729, which would prohibit the unlawful use of seclusion rooms in public pre-K programs, elementary schools, and secondary schools across Rhode Island.

Every child should be able to learn in a safe and supportive environment that helps them grow and feel well. Seclusion rooms can cause serious emotional and psychological harm, especially for students who already face trauma, behavioral challenges, or learning differences. Isolating a child from their classmates does not solve the real issues behind their behavior and can make things worse.

More and more, our communities see how important trauma-informed care, restorative practices, and supportive behavioral interventions are in schools. These methods help us understand

what children need, build trust, and teach students healthy ways to manage their emotions and behavior. Banning seclusion rooms brings Rhode Island closer to these better and more caring approaches.

In my work with families and youth, and as a former Teacher's Assistant and Behavioral Specialist, I have seen how important it is for schools to be places of care, dignity, and opportunity for every child. Policies like House Bill No. 7729 help make sure that discipline does not cause more harm and instead supports environments where students can learn and succeed.

Every child should feel safe at school. Banning seclusion rooms is an important step to protect students and encourage healthier ways to support their behavior.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support House Bill No. 7729.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Diana Garlington

Policy Program Officer

United Way of Rhode Island