



Mr. Chairman and members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill H7894. This legislation will provide limited, structured access to public schools for congressionally chartered youth development organizations, ensuring that students and families are aware of proven, mission-driven opportunities that support academic success, workforce readiness, and healthy development.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is a congressionally chartered organization under Title 36 of the U.S. Code (§30901), and our local Clubs fully meet the definition of “youth organization” outlined in this bill. H7894 recognizes the unique role these organizations play and helps remove unnecessary barriers that prevent students—particularly those who need us most—from learning about available supports.

The Rhode Island Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs represents 27 Club sites statewide, serving 31,396 children and teens. Over 2,000 youth on an average school day attend a Boys & Girls Club. Programs benefit youth from families facing economic hardship with 31% of members from single-parent households and 43% qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch.

Boys & Girls Clubs have long-standing presence and partnership with schools, however, many students and families still do not know that Boys & Girls Clubs exist or how to access programs, especially families new to a school or community. H7894 addresses this challenge in a measured and respectful way.

Access to Boys & Girls Clubs produces clear, measurable outcomes for Rhode Island youth:

- 96% of Club members believe they will graduate high school
- 94% plan to attend college
- 92% report feeling safe being themselves at the Club
- 93% feel encouraged to do their best

In addition, Clubs served 344,977 meals and snacks at no cost to Rhode Island youth in 2024—an essential support for families facing food insecurity.

By ensuring students learn about these opportunities directly through their schools, H7894 helps close access gaps, particularly for students who may not otherwise receive information about out-of-school supports.

H7894 strengthens the connection between Rhode Island schools and trusted, congressionally chartered youth development organizations that already serve tens of thousands of Rhode Island students every year.

We commend the General Assembly for recognizing the importance of youth development programs and urge the committee to support H7894.

Sincerely,

JR Kenny
Director, Government Relations
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Rhode Island Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs