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From: Heidi Andrews <heidiandrews28@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 2:29 PM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: Support H7420

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Please see below written testimony in support of proposed bill H7420

Dear Chair and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Heidi Andrews, and I am writing in support of H7420, the Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act.

I am a resident of Gloucester and an active community member working to bring people together around solutions that strengthen our schools while being mindful of the financial realities facing our communities. I have seen firsthand how deeply people care about education—and how strained our current system has become under the weight of unfunded mandates.

At its core, H7420 addresses a fundamental imbalance: local communities are being asked to carry increasing financial responsibilities without corresponding state support. This creates a system where municipalities must make difficult trade-offs between maintaining high-quality educational services and protecting taxpayers from rising property taxes.

In Foster and Gloucester, like many communities across Rhode Island, we are working hard to find common ground—bringing people together not to argue about problems, but to collaborate on solutions. One of the clearest themes that has emerged from these conversations is the need for greater transparency, flexibility, and fairness in how education requirements are funded.

Unfunded mandates undermine all three. They limit local decision-making, create budget instability, and shift the burden onto taxpayers who are already stretched thin. This not only impacts municipal finances, but also erodes trust in the system itself.

H7420 represents a meaningful step toward restoring balance. By addressing unfunded mandates, this legislation helps ensure that when requirements are placed on school districts, there is a clearer path to funding them responsibly. This supports both educational equity and taxpayer sustainability—two goals that should go hand in hand.

Importantly, this bill does not lower expectations for our schools. Instead, it creates the conditions for those expectations to be met in a way that is realistic, transparent, and fair to local communities.

As someone who is actively working to foster productive dialogue and build consensus at the local level, I strongly believe that state policy should support—not complicate—these efforts. H7420 moves us in that direction.

I respectfully urge you to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Heidi Andrews
Gloucester, RI