

## **Testimony in Support of H7421**

### **AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES — STATE AID**

#### **Before the House Education Committee**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Ferreira, and I am a resident of Glocester, Rhode Island, serving as both a Glocester School Committee Member and a Foster-Glocester School Committee Member. I am writing in strong support of H7421, which increases transparency provisions and requires reporting of partially funded and unfunded school district costs.

At the local level, we are working diligently to build a more informed, collaborative, and solutions-oriented community. A central challenge we face is the lack of clear, accessible information regarding the true cost of education—particularly the growing burden of partially funded and unfunded mandates. Without this transparency, it becomes difficult for taxpayers, school committees, and municipal leaders to fully understand what is driving budget increases and where responsibility truly lies.

The cost of these mandates is overburdening our district and directly impacting our ability to meet students' basic needs. When resources are strained, districts are forced to make difficult trade-offs—impacting environmental improvements, staffing levels, and essential supports. At the same time, schools are facing increasing behavioral and health-related challenges that require daily attention and intervention.

This is not only about education—it is about students' physical safety, psychological well-being, and access to a stable, supportive environment. Without a clear understanding of where financial obligations originate and how they are funded, we risk continuing a system where critical needs go unmet.

H7421 addresses this issue directly by requiring consistent and transparent reporting. This is not simply a technical improvement—it is a foundational

step toward rebuilding trust and enabling better decision-making at every level.

In communities like ours, where we are actively bringing together parents, educators, students, and local leaders to engage in constructive dialogue, access to accurate financial data is essential. Our goal is not to assign blame, but to identify problems clearly and work toward sustainable solutions. When the public can see which costs are state-supported and which are shifted to local taxpayers, conversations become more productive and grounded in fact.

This bill also supports equity across districts. Without standardized reporting, disparities in how mandates are funded can go unnoticed or misunderstood. Transparency ensures that all communities—regardless of size or wealth—have the information needed to advocate effectively for their students.

I urge the Committee to support H7421 and take this important step toward greater accountability, clarity, and collaboration in education funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Amy Ferreira

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