



May 4, 2026

House Committee on Education

Rhode Island State House Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Testimony in support of House Bill No. 8462 ~ AN ACT
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Diana Garlington, and I am a community advocate, and Policy Program Officer at United Way RI. I am here in strong support House Bill No. 8462 requiring transition planning for high school students with disabilities who have a 504 plan, aligning their support with the transition planning already required for students with individualized education programs (IEPs).

This bill addresses a critical gap in our education system. Too often, students with 504 plans receive accommodations during school but are left without clear guidance or support as they prepare for life after graduation. These students still face real challenges, and without intentional transition planning, many fall through the cracks when it comes to college, employment, and independent living.

In my work with young people, especially those navigating systems and barriers, I see how important it is to have a plan, a pathway, and someone helping you prepare for what comes next. Transition planning is not a luxury, it is a necessity. It provides students with direction, confidence, and the tools they need to succeed beyond high school.

Ensuring that students with 504 plans receive the same level of transition support as their peers with IEPs is a matter of fairness and equity. It recognizes that all students with disabilities deserve to be prepared, supported, and empowered as they move into adulthood.

This act is about setting students up for success, not just in school, but in life. It strengthens our education system and helps prevent long-term negative outcomes by making sure no student is overlooked.

I urge you to support this important legislation and ensure that every student has a pathway forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Diana Garlington
Policy Program Officer
United Way of Rhode Island