

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of the House Education Committee

FROM: Jennifer Curry, Homeschool Parent & Rhode Island Resident

DATE: May 18, 2026

RE: OPPOSITION TO HB 8531

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Jennifer Curry, and I am a resident of West Greenwich, Rhode Island. Today, I am writing to you not as a representative of any organization, but simply as a mother.

I have been homeschooling in Rhode Island for **23 consecutive years**. I have guided older children all the way through graduation, and I am still actively homeschooling my younger children today. **I raise and educate an all-boy household—10 sons in total**. Over more than two decades of managing their varying educational needs, I have seen firsthand how beautifully educational freedom works in our state. It is because of this deep, personal experience that I am writing to urgently ask you to **vote NO on HB 8531**.

Under current Rhode Island law, there is a beautiful acknowledgment of a fundamental truth: **the parent is the ultimate facilitator of their child's education, no matter what path is chosen**. Whether a family chooses public, private, charter, or homeschooling, the parent is the one legally and morally responsible for ensuring that child gets to their educational location and attends.

With homeschooling, a parent has the unique ability to step into the role of both facilitator *and* primary educator. When my older boys were younger, it was all me at the kitchen table. But as children advance into upper-level education, a homeschooling parent's role naturally shifts. We become coordinators. I ensure my high schoolers receive a rigorous, proper education, but I regularly farm out specific subjects to community co-ops, specialized online classes, and local career programs.

In fact, our family has deeply valued collaborating with public school resources. **Three of my older sons participated in the Career and Technical Center (CTC) program in Warwick**. That program was an absolute blessing, giving my boys a fantastic foundation that directly shaped their career choices and set them up for professional success.

The results of this cooperative flexibility speak for themselves: **Today, my four adult children all have thriving, full-time careers in the trades, and two of them already own their own investment properties**. By the time my sons reach high school, I am mostly the administrator coordinating their education, not the actual classroom teacher. Our current system allowed them the space to focus on practical, real-world skills that turned them into successful, hard-working adults.

HB 8531 worries me deeply because it fails to understand this modern reality, and it threatens the balance we currently enjoy:

- **It treats good parents like suspects**. This bill would give local school committees the power to deny or delay a parent's choice based on vague terms like "competency" or "capacity." An administrative board cannot accurately measure a parent's "capacity" to

facilitate an education when so much of that role involves coordinating with excellent outside resources, tutors, and programs like the CTC.

- **The mandatory delay disrupts a child's transition.** The requirement that a child must remain enrolled in their current school for up to 45 days while a committee reviews a piece of paper can create unnecessary friction. When a family realizes a child needs a change of environment—whether due to academic pacing, social-emotional struggles, or a sudden change in family circumstances—they need to be able to pivot smoothly. Forcing a child to sit in a holding pattern for weeks just to satisfy administrative paperwork disrupts their educational continuity.
- **It removes a family's safety net.** If a local school committee makes an error or lets a misunderstanding get in the way and denies a family's plan, this bill cuts off their access to an independent court judge. Taking away a family's right to a fair, outside legal appeal is a concerning precedent for any parent.

Twenty-three years ago, I chose a path of educational freedom because I knew it was what my children needed to thrive. Rhode Island's current laws have allowed my family—and thousands of others—to succeed beautifully. We do not have a homeschooling crisis in our state; we have a community of dedicated, law-abiding parents doing incredible work alongside our local communities.

HB 8531 fixes no existing problem, but it threatens to damage the foundation of parental rights and cooperative education in our state. Please, protect Rhode Island families and **vote NO on this bill.**

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of my family's story.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Curry

510 Weaver Hill Rd
West Greenwich RI, 02817
mrsjencurry@gmail.com
401-368-1021