

Lisa Cataldi

From: Keyra Fernandez <kfe1918@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 11:21 AM
To: House Education Committee
Cc: Rep. McNamara, Joseph M.; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Kislak, Rebecca M.
Subject: STRONGEST OPPOSITION to H-8531 (An Act Relating to Education - Compulsory Attendance)

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Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing as a highly qualified educator holding a university degree and previously foreign Doctoral capacity degree, a resident of Providence, and a parent to strongly oppose House Bill 8531. This bill introduces dangerous, subjective mechanisms that allow school districts to disrupt a child's successful education under the guise of administrative oversight.

My family has experienced firsthand the contrast between institutional failure and homeschooling success. While attending public school in Rhode Island, my son Gael was not meeting the Rhode Island Core Standards due to a severe lack of adequate support for his documented developmental and educational needs. The public school system failed to provide the necessary framework for him to thrive or maintain basic academic benchmarks.

Since withdrawing him to provide customized, at-home instruction, his academic progress has been independently evaluated by a well known and competent evaluator and formally certified as fully meeting grade-level standards by February 20 2026.

House Bill 8531 proposes that a local school committee can subjectively trigger a "review" of a parent's capacity and mandate that the child be forced back into a public school classroom during that deliberation window. In our case, this would legally compel me to return my child to an environment that already failed him, interrupting an educational model that has successfully brought him up to state standards and allow him to neurologically recover to the hazard public school environment caused.

It appears this provision serves primarily to protect institutional enrollment counts and secure per-pupil funding during administrative delays, rather than serving the "best interest of the child." Forcing a child back into an unsupported environment where they previously fell behind and where physically ill due to it is counterproductive and harmful.

I have the academic credentials to teach, and my son has the independent certifications proving his success at home. I urge the committee to vote NO on H-8531 and protect families from this harmful bureaucratic overreach.

Sincerely,

Keyra Fernandez
Providence, RI

