



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ^{AFT}_{AFL - CIO}

To: House Education Committee

From: James Parisi, Field Representative

Date: April 14, 2021

Re: **Student Access to Internet**

Testimony in **support** of 2021-H 5934 (Ranglin-Vassell et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports Representative Ranglin-Vassell's bill to require all school districts to provide high-speed internet to all students. The importance of technology in education is apparent to everyone, yet Rhode Islanders lack universal access to high-speed internet.

H 5964 would create an internet reimbursement fund in the state budget. The RIFTHP believes that it would be an excellent use of one-time federal Covid rescue and relief funds known as the American Rescue Plan. Using these funds to increase student access to education services with internet access would directly address some of the learning gaps created by the pandemic.

We think that the idea merits serious consideration, as internet access is important to students even when schools are full in-person.

There are gaps in student access to internet that can be remedied by state funding, (supported by one-time federal funds) that would benefit the education of all Rhode Island students.

The RIFTHP appreciates Rep. Ranglin-Vassell's student advocacy and we urge passage of H 5934.

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