

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Emily Ustach <emily@newurbanarts.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:31 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Opposed to House Bill 8310

Dear members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives Committee on Finance.

I write in opposition to House Bill 8310. I am deeply concerned for the safety of our children and youth. This bill denies years of research showing that police officers and school resource officers not only fail to keep our students safe, but actively harm and endanger them. I want to acknowledge that the proponents of this bill are acting from a very real and valid fear, given the recent spike in gun violence and the mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas. I, like many of you, wish for schools to be sites of safety, belonging and learning. There are many strategies that are much more effective at supporting those goals that do not involve armed officers in schools. Such practices include restorative justice, increased mental and social emotional health services, prioritizing arts and expressive opportunities during the school day, and expanding access to after school and out of school time experiences for young people.

As a parent of a 3 year old, who is committed to supporting public education, I am terrified of the knee-jerk reaction to arming our schools. Please take the time to research more effective strategies to keeping our school safe.

Thank you,  
Emily Ustach

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Emily Ustach

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