



Rhode Island League of Charter Schools

Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H-8310 – Opposed

Dear Chairman Abney:

I write to express our opposition to H-8310, which would require all Rhode Island schools to place a minimum of two (2) resource officers at their school. We believe the decision to employ school resource officers in our schools should be left to our school leaders and their boards to decide.

Without question, we all believe that the safety and security of our students, faculties and school communities are of paramount concern and priority. All of our charter school leaders understand that they must take the necessary and appropriate steps to achieve that objective. However, not all school leaders view the placement of school resource officers as either necessary or appropriate to secure their school communities. In their view, other measures, such as securing their facilities and addressing the mental health, and social/emotional needs of their students are far more effective than the use of school resource officers. They also view these other measures to be a more cost-effective use of school resources than the costs associated with employing school resource officers.

Most of our charter schools are small learning communities that do not warrant a law enforcement presence to be safe and secure. We must rely on the judgment of our school leaders to know what are the appropriate measures that maintain safety within the culture of their school communities. For many school leaders, the presence of law enforcement is inconsistent with the culture of their schools. Therefore, school leaders must have the latitude to decide what is appropriate and necessary.

We recognize that in light of the recent school shooting in Uvalde TX, there is a heightened sense of urgency to make sure that when students arrive at school that they will be safe and protected. Towards that end, be assured that our charter school leaders take that responsibility as paramount and are taking all the necessary and appropriate steps to protect their school communities. Though well-intentioned, we respectfully oppose the purpose of H-8310.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith A. Oliveira", written over a horizontal line.

Keith A. Oliveira
Executive Director

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