

April 22, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5319 – A N A C T RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- RETIREMENT OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 5319, which would allow any peace officer serving as a full-time or part-time school resource officer (SRO) in Rhode Island schools to work beyond the current seventy-five (75) working day limit in a calendar year without interruption to their retirement or other earned benefits.

We sincerely appreciate the sponsor's thoughtful intent behind this legislation. As municipalities across the state continue to face staffing shortages and resource constraints, the flexibility provided by this bill would enable schools to retain experienced and dedicated peace officers in a consistent, impactful role. School resource officers play a vital part in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. They not only help deter and respond to threats but also build meaningful relationships with students, staff, and families that strengthen the fabric of our school communities.

This bill recognizes the realities of municipal workforce limitations and supports the broader goal of ensuring that our local schools remain safe, welcoming, and well-supported. Allowing retired officers to continue contributing their skills and experience without jeopardizing their benefits will help municipalities fill critical staffing needs while ensuring continuity and stability for students.

We urge the General Assembly to pass House Bill 5319 and thank the bill's sponsors for their leadership and commitment to our cities and towns.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Finance Committee