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Representative Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for House Bill 5976, Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time. This bill would provide four million dollars (\$4,000,000) to expand and strengthen after school, school vacation, summer learning, and workforce development programs for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). It would also fund professional development for staff who work directly with young people.

The Providence After School Alliance (PASA) helps close persistent opportunity gaps among Providence youth by expanding access to and engagement in an ecosystem of high-quality out-of-school time learning environments. Having served 22,000 youth over the past 20 years, our adolescent participants experience positive change in their school-day attendance, learning engagement, and social interactions.

Last academic year, 87% of our middle school participants reported that PASA's programs helped them find out what they like to do, 84% reported that the programs helped them get along better with peers, and 77% said our afterschool programs made them want to go to school more often. Among our high school participants, 88% reported an increase in learning interest and 79% reported a positive change in critical thinking skills.

Rhode Island must expand this work to ensure that more Rhode Island students have access to high-quality learning opportunities year-round. And, given that so much of the existing work is funded by federal dollars that remain at-risk, we must ensure that we have the state funds to support this work moving forward.

I respectfully urge you to pass House Bill 5976.

Sincerely,

Ann Durham