

RI House Finance Committee

4/29/2025

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill 6045 (H6045)

Dear Chairperson Abney and members of the Finance Committee:

I am Chelsea Frade, a lifelong Rhode Island resident, from House District 38. I am also a student in the Master of Social Work at Rhode Island College, who plans on building my career in this state.

I absolutely support House Bill 6045 which mandates public schools (K-12) have one full-time certified social worker for every 250 students and allocates \$2 million in the fiscal year 2025 budget for school districts and municipalities to hire additional social workers.

I support this bill because the mental health and overall wellbeing of Rhode Island's students must be a priority.

I am a behavior specialist who works with students of all grades and in many different districts across the state. One thing, regardless of demographics or location, which all of Rhode Island's students have in common is they are struggling. I work with the most vulnerable of students and there are countless instances of emotional or physical crisis situations and the school social worker is not in the building, overloaded with other students, or simply nonexistent due to staff shortage. Just this week there was a crucially needed threat assessment for an elementary school student and we had to wait over an hour for the social worker to come from another building in the district. Our students deserve access to social workers when they need them. Additionally, many students have it written into IEP plans, so it is illegal to not provide adequate social workers. Urge your state legislators to support House Bill 6045 which allocates funds to make it possible for a ratio of 250 students to a school social worker. This bill is a critical first step to helping our very much struggling students. Social workers save lives. Our children need them. Our future depends on it.

I urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 6045.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to write in favor of this highly crucial bill.

Sincerely,

Chelsea E Frade

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Westerly, RI 02891

House District 38