

**To: Senate/House Finance Committee**

**From:** Hanna Bjork, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker

**Date:** March 12th, 2025

**Re:** In Support of House bill 6045. AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

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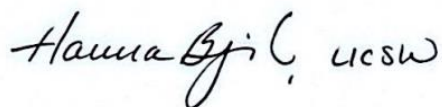
Dear Senate Finance Chair Marvin Abney and esteemed members of the finance committee.

My name is Hanna Bjork and I am a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker at Bradley Hospital in East Providence, Rhode Island. I work with children and adolescents in need of psychiatric care. I am reaching out to you in support of the proposed legislation, bill number 6045.

During the nearly ten years I have worked at Bradley Hospital, I have practiced across many contexts including inpatient, partial, outpatient, and emergency care. In each of these settings I have worked closely with school social workers to support the children in our communities. When there has been an absence of a school social worker it is apparent, establishing social workers into schools helps keep our children supported in their communities and keeps them out of hospitals. When a school social worker is present the child's treatment plan/IEP/504 are reviewed, discussed, and followed closely, the child has a person and space to manage school related stressors in real time versus waiting until home or outpatient appointments, and the child has a clinically trained staff member to safety plan with, if needed, which can avoid unnecessary emergency department visits. Families and children rely on the embedded clinical support of a school social worker to help ease distress and support the generalization of skills. Their training and expertise are invaluable in a school environment and should be protected at all costs and increased to a ratio of one social worker for every two hundred and fifty students. Children are among the most vulnerable populations and require trained adults to advocate for their social/emotional and educational needs and safeguard them from psychosocial stressors.

Please consider what is at stake here and do what is best for our Rhode Island students by supporting and passing House bill 6045.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hanna Bjork, LICSW". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hanna Bjork

Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker