

Chris O'Brien

From: Abbie Patterson <abbiempatterson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2025 4:12 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: HB 5749

Dear Finance Committee Members,

My name is Abbie Patterson, and I live in East Greenwich. My state representative is Justine Caldwell, and I am writing in support of HB 5749, which would add indispensable aid for our schools in EG that are struggling significantly with an \$800,000 gap in state funding this year.

Like many other residents, I moved to East Greenwich because of the overwhelmingly positive reviews about the school system. Can you imagine my surprise when I learned the average teachers' salaries, the lack of any meaningful extracurricular programming, and the near dilapidated facilities that are overflowing as fast as they are crumbling? Public education is one of the greatest foundations of our country, and it breaks my heart to see neighbor after neighbor choosing private school over what should be an exceptional public school district, because of the lack of cooperation and partnership between the state, district, and town in finding solutions to a very long lasting problem- the underfunded school budget in East Greenwich.

My middle school son has not attended a single field trip since he left elementary school. Cole Middle School is a shell of a community, there are no activities outside of class and a bare bones sports structure. Now Eldredge and Hanaford Elementary Schools are looking at a future without a librarian! We cannot continue on this way, and more importantly, there's no need for it. This community can do better, but we need structure and support in order to compromise and make long lasting changes for the betterment of our children's futures.

Please pass HB 5749 not for me, or even for my kids, but because Rhode Island's children shouldn't have to choose between sanitation workers and teachers. We owe our children better than we have given them and the time for that to end is now!

Thanks so much,

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-Abbie Patterson, M.A.ed.

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