

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 6255**  
**Submitted to the House Committee on Finance**  
**The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair**  
**Rhode Island House of Representatives**

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee:

I write to express my strong support for House Bill 6255, which would restore local governance of the Central Falls School District and ensure sustainable, predictable governance and funding for our schools. This bill is not simply a policy adjustment—it is a long-overdue act of justice. It finally gives Central Falls families, educators, and local leaders a meaningful voice in shaping the future of their schools.

I am a science teacher at Central Falls High School and a proud alumnus of the same school. I was a student there in 1991 when the state first took control of our district. One of the first things we experienced after the takeover was a budget cut. Even then, we understood that our district received less than others. The takeover only confirmed what we suspected: the state and the Department of Education did not view Central Falls as deserving of equitable investment.

Despite the promise of state intervention, the Rhode Island Department of Education has failed to transform Central Falls into a model district. Instead, it has underfunded and marginalized our schools while extending enthusiastic and often unfettered support to charter schools—some of which employ exclusionary enrollment practices and contribute to a segregated system of education. These inequities have diverted resources and attention away from traditional public schools like ours, where all students are welcome, regardless of language ability, special needs, or socio-economic background.

In 2010, following the firing of all Central Falls High School teachers, I returned to teach at my alma mater. There, I found what anyone would expect under a system of sustained neglect and structural inequity: incredibly talented and resilient students who deserve so much more than what they've been given.

Today, as a member of the Central Falls Community Advisory Board, I have worked alongside students, families, educators, and local leaders to envision a better path forward. Through a collaborative process, we reached strong consensus: it is time to return control of our schools to the people who know and care most about our children—and to do so with fiscal responsibility. House Bill 6255 reflects that vision.

This bill is not just about governance. It is about justice, opportunity, and belief in the potential of every child. Over the years, I've had the joy of teaching remarkable students, including Dr. David Hernandez, who became the first CFHS student accepted into Brown University's Pre-Liberal Medical Education program, and others who went on to attend MIT and Harvard. Talent is not rare in Central Falls—opportunity is.

House Bill 6255 is a critical step toward restoring equity, voice, and trust to a community that has long been denied all three. I urge you to pass this legislation and stand with the people of Central Falls.

Sincerely,



**David Upegui, PhD**

Science Teacher, Central Falls High School