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**Rhode Island Works Best When We Say UNION YES.**

May 15, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI

RE: Testimony in Support of HB6255 – An Act Relating to Education – School Committees and Superintendents – Central Falls School District

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, representing more than 80,000 union members and their families across the state, I submit this letter in strong support of House Bill 6255. Upon passage, this bill would restore local governance of the Central Falls School District and bring much needed stability and transparency to its funding structure.

We have over a thousand union members who live, work, and raise families in Central Falls, many of which are deeply connected with the public education system, whether as educators, school staff, construction workers, healthcare providers, or parents of public-school students. After more than three decades of state control, we believe the time has come to return decision-making to those who know this community best: its families, educators, elected officials, and local leaders.

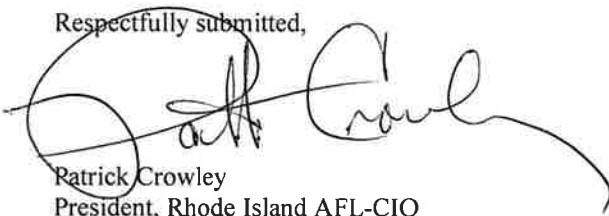
This legislation reflects over a year of thoughtful community engagement and collaboration with a dedicated community advisory board which included leaders from the city, schools, and local and state labor partners. The advisory board reached a strong consensus, recommending a 9-member hybrid school board with both elected and appointed members. Most importantly, HB6255 brings accountability back to the local level, where decisions can be made transparently and with the input of those most directly affected.

We also support HB6255's provisions to stabilize the district's funding through the Central Falls Stabilization Fund, ensuring that all CF students receive the education they deserve through reliable and sustainable funding. This bill leverages the community's local assets to bring revenue to the school district by directing any state Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) revenues from the Wyatt Detention Facility, currently the only detention center in RI excluded from the PILOT program, be used to support the Stabilization Fund. This community-driven solution improves equity without increasing the burden on state taxpayers; while providing the city the time it needs to regain control and identify financial efficiency opportunities and address financial concerns within the school district.

For too long, Central Falls has been left without the tools to govern its own schools, despite the efforts and commitment of so many in the community. House Bill 6255 is a long-overdue step toward local empowerment and educational justice, that ensures local workers, community members and elected officials have a voice in shaping the future of the city's public schools. For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to pass this legislation and allow Central Falls to usher in a new chapter of local leadership and community investment that benefits all CF students, workers, and residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation, please do not hesitate to call me if you have any further questions 401-751-7100.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick Crowley  
President, Rhode Island AFL-CIO

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