

TO: Members of the House Finance Committee, State of Rhode Island General Assembly

FROM: Adam C. McGovern, Chairperson, Bristol Warren Regional School District

DATE: May 20, 2025

RE: Written Testimony in support of the 2025 H 6236 - An Act Relating to Education - Transportation of School Pupils Beyond City and Town Limits Recommendations regarding Student Transportation Legislation Changes

Dear Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

My name is Adam McGovern and I am the current chairperson of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee.

Bristol and Warren, almost perfectly distanced between Providence in Newport is for the most part considered in the center of the east bay of Rhode Island. However, from a statewide school transportation perspective, Bristol Warren is not considered in the east bay. The current transportation region that we are assigned to requires us to support student transportation to places such as Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket, and as far away as Smithfield. This has a significant direct cost for the district and requires us to move funds from other areas of our operating budget to cover these increased transportation costs. Some of these costs are directly related to the wellbeing of our students. For example, we have had to let go of a social worker last year and will most likely have to do the same again this year. In addition to we had to eliminate some elementary interventionist positions.

At a time where public schools are facing more scrutiny and local school districts face increased costs, we need to find every way to give support at the local level. I am respectfully asking to support the Change in legislation to create a new "East Bay" transportation region, Region 6, which will consist of Bristol, Warren, East Providence. This will provide our school district significant savings which we can apply directly to the outcome of our students. While the state is currently looking at a budget deficit, this is a way for the state to free up more money for public education without increasing the burden on the state budget.

Thank you for your consideration in supporting this legislation.

Adam McGovern

Chairperson

Bristol Warren Regional School Committee