

Dear Representative Tanzi, and RI House Finance Committee Members,

As the subject line of this message states, I am against the passage of Bill #6236 which would eliminate bussing for certain students. Our child went to public school in South Kingstown and would come home each day telling us how much she hated school. Sadly, our public schools are mandated to operate in ways that do not meet the needs of all students and that certainly was the case for our child. She now attends the Meadowbrook Waldorf School and comes home each day talking about how much she loves school. Sending her to this school was not my first choice. We actually bought our house in Wakefield with the expectation she would walk to school and attend Wakefield Elementary, so our intent was never to send our child to a private school. Doing so is a burden on our family, but is a necessary one. Removing bussing would worsen that burden.

Many families that attend Meadowbrook and other private schools are not wealthy families. They receive financial support from the schools to make attendance possible. In addition, these families all pay their taxes and should at least get bussing to the school that is appropriate for their child. These parents are working, tax paying, wonderful community members who would be harmed by removing bussing.

I used to hear things like school choice, and vouchers, and similar concepts and think "what about public schools"? Now, I know better. We enter our daughter into the lottery for The Compass School every year. Each time, we receive an email that says your child did not get a spot this year, but we have put them on the wait list and they are number 400 or 500. Families need more options - not fewer options. When there are hundreds of students trying to get into each grade at one of our public charter schools, it is a canary in the coal mine. Bussing isn't about supporting rich families - it's about supporting all families.

Please Do Better,  
Ed Eads  
Wakefield, RI