



May 20, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-6236 – A N A C T RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TRANSPORTATION OF SCHOOL PUPILS BEYOND CITY AND TOWN LIMITS

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express our support for House Bill 6236, which proposes thoughtful and fiscally responsible changes to the structure of school transportation districts across the state.

This legislation would modernize the school bus districting system by increasing the number of transportation regions from five to nine. These updated boundaries reflect current demographic and geographic realities and would allow for greater efficiency, potential cost savings, and reduced travel times for many students in grades K-12. Municipalities and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have long expressed concern over inefficiencies and inequities in the current regional transportation model, which was established in 1977 and no longer aligns with today's student populations and school locations.

Importantly, H-6236 recognizes the value of stability and continuity by grandfathering students currently receiving transportation under the existing regional framework through July 1, 2029. This provision ensures that families and districts have ample time to plan and adjust to the new structure.

Additionally, we commend the bill's inclusion of guaranteed categorical aid for excess transportation costs related to out-of-district non-public school students. By ensuring that aid will not fall below the levels provided in FY 2026 or FY 2027, the legislation provides a level of predictability and protection for municipalities and LEAs budgeting for these expenses.

Most notably, H-6236 would repurpose any unspent transportation funds to establish a dedicated student transportation subsidy to support some of our most vulnerable student populations, those experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or with high-cost special needs. This is a critical and compassionate step toward equity, and it provides communities with targeted resources for students who often face the greatest transportation challenges.

The League believes that H-6236 represents a well-balanced and forward-looking policy reform that respects local needs, delivers fiscal benefits, and improves services for students across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Committee on Finance