

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

April 27, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of House bill 7318, titled "AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT"

Dear Chair Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am Chris Kona from Richmond, in RI House District 34.

I support House bill 7318, titled "AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT".

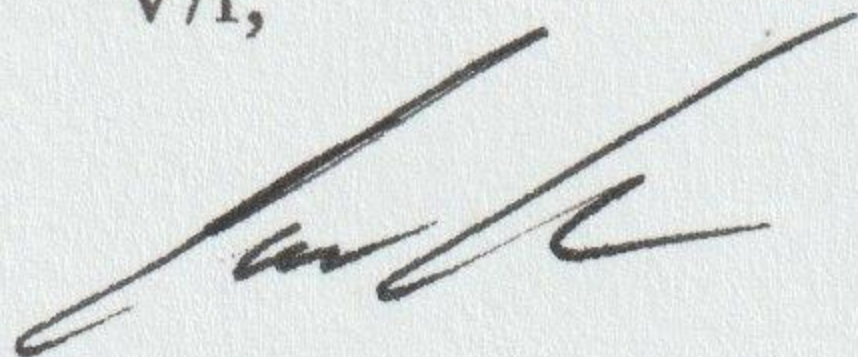
I support House bill 7318, because my children and my neighbor's children attend Chariho Regional School District. The Chariho regional school district is an outstanding example of what benefits can emerge from regional school districts. It provides a broad education across a diverse range of socioeconomic groups. By combining the school districts, it provides students in some of the more remote parts of Rhode Island with an opportunity for an outstanding public education, and thus with an opportunity for a career, potential follow-on education, and a future.

However, while regionalizing school districts comes with additional costs. Students at the far end of Hopkinton, Charlestown, and Richmond have an equal right to receive a public education. However, they do not cost the same to transport them to and from school. A diverse socioeconomic base means that public schools can provide students who need more support the help they need to have a fair shot at life, but some require more resources than others.

Regional school districts provide efficiencies, but these efficiencies cannot be realized through a simple sum of the parts. If the state has a desire to see more regionalization – a topic that comes up more and more as enrollment numbers shrink across the state – it must show that it supports the regional school districts that already exist. If we are left to hold out on our own, it sends a warning to other districts considering regionalization to avoid such a move at all costs.

I urge you to vote in favor of House bill 7318.

V/r,



Chris Kona  
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House District 34