

Dear committee members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Yariely Torres Santos, I am a 10th grader at Rhode Island Nursing Institute High School and a youth at Young Voices, an afterschool program in Providence, RI. I am here today in support of H7456 which would require all public schools(K-12) to have at least one full-time certified school social worker for every two hundred and fifty students.

The bill is really important to me because my social worker at school has helped me a lot with my mental health. Without her, I wouldn't have the support I needed to continue being in school and improving myself. Many kids at my school don't have access to the social worker because of her work load, which means many of them are left without the resources that they need to thrive. It worries me to think that so many students can't find the help that they need so desperately, because there is only one social worker in the school.

We need to pass this bill because it would make sure all students have access to social workers and moral support and it would take the stress and workload off of the social workers. I urge you to pass H7456 and help all students in RI.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Yariely