

Dear members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Sofia Cubillos Viasus, I am a 12th grader at Jacqueline M. Walsh School and a youth at Young Voices, an afterschool program in Providence, RI. I am here today in support of H7501 which would provide one hundred thousand dollars in the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget to support the mental health and emotional well being of children and youth through investments in out of school time.

The bill is really important to me because it allows students to participate in programs of their career interest. It opens the door to networking with different students/professionals outside of the school setting. It provides a safe space to students without a supportive network. It also creates more opportunities for students with economic disadvantages.

We need to pass this bill because it contributes to a stronger community among the youth by diversifying their learning spaces. It facilitates the process of gaining new friends for shy people. It improves and expands knowledge previously learned at school.

I firmly believe that this bill will create an impact for the future of the youth of Rhode Island by expanding their opportunities to learn outside of the standard school setting. Please support all students across the state by passing H7501.

Thank you for your time and attention today,

Sofia Cubillos Viasus