



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: House Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, Field Representative
Date: April 28, 2026
Re: Healthy School Meals for All
Testimony in Support of 2026-**H 8157** (Representative Caldwell, et. al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of H-8157, legislation that addresses funding instability by strengthening the state's poverty loss stabilization support for school districts.

School districts rely on predictable funding to maintain staffing, programming, and services for students. When fluctuations in the funding formula result in sudden decreases in aid, districts are often forced to make difficult and disruptive cuts that impact classrooms, educators, and student support.

H-8157 improves the existing stabilization mechanism by increasing the level of support provided to districts experiencing significant decreases in state aid due to changes in poverty-related calculations. By raising the reimbursement level from fifty percent to seventy-five percent of the loss, the bill provides a more effective buffer against abrupt funding shifts and allows districts more time to adjust responsibly.

From the perspective of educators and school staff, stable funding is essential to maintaining consistent learning environments and avoiding disruptions that negatively affect students. This proposal helps ensure that changes in the funding formula do not translate into immediate cuts to services or staffing.

This is a practical and targeted improvement that strengthens the reliability of Rhode Island's education funding system while protecting students and school communities from unnecessary disruption.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H-8157.

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