

## **Written Testimony in Support of the Youth Development Bond (HB 8489)**

### **House Finance Committee**

#### **Members of the House Finance Committee:**

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of the Youth Development Bond (HB 8489), which will provide critical capital funding for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Rhode Island.

I am honored to serve on the Board of Directors for the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket, where I have seen firsthand the essential role the Club plays in supporting youth and families in our city.

In Pawtucket, this investment represents far more than a facilities upgrade—it is a cornerstone project aligned with the city’s broader economic and community revitalization efforts, particularly along the riverfront corridor. As Pawtucket continues to transform and attract new development, it is essential that we invest equally in the infrastructure that serves our residents, especially our youth.

The proposed investment will support a transformative initiative centered on the Club’s 20-acre outdoor campus, directly complementing the City of Pawtucket’s riverfront redevelopment strategy. Planned improvements include upgraded athletic and recreation spaces, a state-of-the-art turf field, modernized courts, educational nature trails, outdoor learning environments, and a fully ADA-accessible inclusive playground, the first significant playground investment on this property in decades.

The Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket serves a community where approximately 85% of participating youth come from low-to-moderate income households—many without access to safe, high-quality outdoor spaces. In a dense urban environment like Pawtucket, projects like this are not “nice to have”—they are essential community assets that provide safe, structured, and enriching environments for young people.

This investment will not only expand youth development opportunities, but also create meaningful public access to green space, strengthen neighborhood connectivity, and enhance the long-term value of one of Pawtucket’s most important redevelopment areas.

As a board member, former Club kid, and a community stakeholder, I strongly believe this project represents one of the most impactful youth-centered investments currently underway in Pawtucket. It reflects a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the city’s growth and revitalization are shared by the families and young people who call it home.

I respectfully urge the Committee to approve HB 8489 and support this important investment in Pawtucket and communities across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Paul Pinto**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - Board of Directors

Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket