

TO: House Finance Committee

FROM: Melissa A. Hamlin

Bill # 5211

Position: For this legislation

I am writing to state my position for Bill #5211, not only as a current member of the RIAN (Rhode Island Afterschool Network) executive committee but also as a working parent.

When my daughters were little and I was a single working mother, I looked to afterschool programs and summer programs to provide a safe place for them to be so I could work to financially provide for them. They had support with homework. They established bonds with other children. I was fortunate to have a job, where I could fully fund their afterschool and summertime programs, but you all know that there are so many parents in the state of Rhode Island that do not have this opportunity. All children in our state, throughout all communities, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income levels, deserve to have this opportunity afforded to them.

Based on the most recent America After 3 pm report (released Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020), here are facts relating to out of school learning.

- 20,122 kids were alone and unsupervised between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. in 2020 here in Rhode Island.
- For every child in an afterschool program, 3 more children are waiting to get in and 59,000 youth want to participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them here in Rhode Island.
- 91 % Parent satisfaction with afterschool programs is high and 89% of Parents overwhelmingly support public funding for afterschool.
- The most recent cost to incarcerate one youth for a year in Rhode Island is \$263,750.00 when resources needed to incarcerate a youth could be better allocated towards Afterschool and Summer Programs. Resources can be better used for afterschool and summer programs that are proven to prevent adolescent arrests and incarceration here in RI according to the ACLU.

Learning loss for children, especially during this pandemic, is dire. We, as a community, need to help curb the loss that has already plagued so many during the past year.

I urge this committee to vote for Bill #5211 and amend the state budget by allocating \$2 million to support effective afterschool and summer learning.

Thank you,

Melissa Hamlin