



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

To: House Innovation, Internet, & Technology Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: April 8, 2026
Re: **Student Device Privacy**
Testimony in **Support** of H 7032 (Speakman, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of **H 7032**, legislation that establishes clear protections for student privacy by limiting when schools can access audio, video, and location data on student devices.

Rhode Island students increasingly rely on school-issued and personal devices for learning, but current law does not adequately safeguard against intrusive monitoring. Without clear standards, students and families face uncertainty about when schools or third parties may activate cameras, microphones, or track location data. This raises serious concerns about student safety, trust, and the appropriate boundaries of school authority.

H 7032 creates a balanced and commonsense framework by prohibiting unauthorized access to audio, video, and location data while allowing narrowly tailored exceptions for legitimate purposes such as imminent safety threats or judicial warrants. Importantly, the bill requires transparency through timely notification to students and families when such access occurs. These provisions ensure accountability while preserving the ability of schools to respond to emergencies.

Educators and school staff understand the importance of maintaining safe learning environments, but that responsibility must be paired with clear privacy protections. In practice, unclear policies can create confusion for staff and erode trust between schools and families. Establishing statewide standards supports both educators and students by providing clarity and consistency across districts.

Strong public schools depend on trust. Students must feel confident that their personal devices are not subject to unnecessary surveillance, and educators must operate within clear, reasonable guidelines. H 7032 strikes the right balance between safety and privacy, aligning with Rhode Island's commitment to student well-being and responsible use of technology.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H 7032.

356 SMITH STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-3761 (401) 273-9800 FAX (401) 331-8815

• **Maribeth K. Calabro**, President • **Maria Manzi**, Executive Assistant • **Bridget McDonough**, Administrative Assistant •
• **Michael J. Mullane**, Field Representative • **James A. Parisi**, Field Representative •
• **Christopher Lambert**, Field Representative • **Jeremy Sencer**, Field Representative •
• **Sean Doyle**, Field Representative •