



## Testimony in Opposition to H7042

April 15, 2026

To: House Labor Committee

I write today in opposition to H7042, which would allow some public sector employees, including teachers, to strike, disrupting essential services that families and communities rely on every day. This represents a significant shift from current law, which recognizes that educators—like firefighters, police officers, and healthcare workers—play a critical role in maintaining the health, safety, and stability of our communities.

This legislation would harm students, families, and communities. The disruption caused by a strike does not stay within the school building; it ripples across the entire Rhode Island workforce. Schools are not just workplaces; they are places where students learn, grow, and find belonging, and they are central to how families structure their lives.

When schools close unexpectedly due to a strike, families are left scrambling to arrange childcare, and parents must miss work or adjust schedules with little notice. Students lose access to consistent learning and the many benefits of attending school, including building relationships, collaborating with peers, and engaging in hands-on learning.

Our state's most vulnerable families and children would lose the most from H7042. For those already navigating financial strain, juggling multiple jobs, or lacking strong support systems, the loss of school due to a teacher's strike can result in more than just missed lessons. It can mean lost family income, lost meals, lost structure, and lost access to critical services. For children with the greatest needs, the disruption of routine and critical services could have lasting consequences.

There are better ways to support educators and resolve disputes without putting students and families in the middle. Rhode Island already has systems in place, including mediation and arbitration, which provide a structured and fair path to agreement while ensuring continuity for students and predictability for families. **For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose H7042 and continue protecting the continuity of education that Rhode Island students and families deserve.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Sincerely,

*Lauren K. B. Matlach*

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Deputy Director

Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools