



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Hanna M. Gallo, Chair
Senate Education Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SENATE BILL 2079 – AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Chair Gallo and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we are writing to express our support for Senate Bill 2079, which would require all middle and high schools, both public and private, to maintain functional automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on site and implement a comprehensive cardiac emergency response plan, including coverage of athletic activities, beginning with the 2027-2028 academic year.

Municipalities share a fundamental responsibility to safeguard the health and well-being of their residents, and our students are among our most valued resources. Ensuring that schools are equipped with AEDs and a coordinated response plan directly protects these students and provides critical, potentially life-saving interventions during cardiac emergencies. Immediate access to this lifesaving equipment and trained personnel can make the difference between life and death, especially in the context of sudden cardiac events.

The League also recognizes the diverse capacities and resources of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Successful implementation of Senate Bill 2079 will require coordination with local school districts to ensure that AED placement, training, and emergency response procedures are appropriately tailored to the size, population, and unique characteristics of each school community. We further encourage the Legislature to consider mechanisms to support districts facing financial hardship, such as eligibility for state or federal grants, private gifts, or other forms of procurement assistance, so that all schools, regardless of local resources, can comply with the law and prioritize student safety.

The League commends the sponsor of this legislation for prioritizing student safety and encourages the Senate to respectfully pass Senate Bill 2079. We stand ready to work with school districts, municipalities, and sponsors to help ensure the successful implementation of this bill across Rhode Island, so that our students remain safe, protected, and well cared for in every school setting.

We appreciate the Committee's thoughtful review and thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Education Committee