



April 15, 2026

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

RE: S2212

I am writing on behalf of the National Education Association of Rhode Island and our 12,000 members, I write in opposition to Senate Bill 2212, which proposes significant changes to teacher certification requirements in Rhode Island.

We appreciate and share the underlying intent of this legislation—to reduce unnecessary barriers to entering the teaching profession and to strengthen educator recruitment. These are important and urgent goals as school districts across Rhode Island continue to face staffing challenges. However, as a union representing professional educators, we have serious concerns about the approach outlined in this bill.

At its core, teaching is a profession that requires both strong pedagogical skills and demonstrated content knowledge. While flexibility and multiple pathways into the profession can be valuable, there must remain a clear, consistent, and rigorous standard for evaluating whether an educator possesses the subject-matter competency necessary to effectively teach students. The provisions in this bill that allow for expanded waivers, substitutions of coursework with life or work experience, and certification without traditional examination risk undermining that standard.

A standardized and objective measure of content knowledge, whether through examinations, coursework, or other validated assessments, is essential to maintaining the integrity of the profession and ensuring that all students receive high-quality instruction. Removing or diluting these benchmarks could lead to inconsistencies in educator preparedness and, ultimately, impact student outcomes.

It is also important to note that the K-12 Council of the Board of Education has already approved recent changes to certification regulations designed to address many of the barriers this bill seeks to remedy. These reforms have not yet been evaluated. Proceeding with sweeping statutory changes before understanding the impact of those adjustments is premature and risks creating confusion and instability within the certification system.

While we support efforts to modernize and improve educator pathways, those efforts must be balanced with maintaining high professional standards and ensuring accountability. We believe the existing regulatory process, already underway, offers a more measured and thoughtful approach to achieving these goals.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2212.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini".

Alexander Lucini  
Government Relations Director, NEARI