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March 4, 2026

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

RE: SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2016 – Relating to Education – Media Literacy

Dear Chairwoman Gallo and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2016.

We are currently living through a period of information vertigo. Whether it is a deepfake video or an AI-generated article, the line between fact and editorialized spin has become dangerously thin. Today, text can look professional yet be entirely untethered from the truth or occupy a gray area somewhere in the middle, using partial truths to manipulate perception. Most adults today find themselves overwhelmed by this, often wishing they had received formal training in digital due diligence. We cannot allow the next generation to enter adulthood without these tools.

Media literacy is a critical thinking framework. It is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and act using all forms of communication. In the context of S2016, it means equipping students to identify bias and distinguish between credible journalism and fabricated “news.”

Furthermore, I would like to commend Chairwoman Gallo and Senator DiPalma for their leadership on the companion issue of resources. While S2016 sets the necessary standard, Senate Bill 2233 provides the essential funding source to make this vision a reality for every district. I look forward to testifying in support of S2233 before the Senate Finance Committee to ensure our educators have the categorical funding required to best meet this mandate.

By passing S2016, Rhode Island ensures its students are not targets for manipulation, but are instead active, discerning participants in our democracy. I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend S2016 for passage.

Sincerely,

Hillary Lima, MPA
Policy & Coalition Strategy Manager
Generation Citizen & Rhode Island Civic Learning Coalition