



May 13, 2026

Hon. Hanna M. Gallo  
Chair  
Senate Education Committee  
[Slegislation@rilegislature.gov](mailto:Slegislation@rilegislature.gov)

**Re: Support for SB 2784 – An Act Relating to Education – Establishment of Charter Public Schools.**

Dear Chair Gallo,

BuildRI is a domestic non-profit trade association comprised of four (4) contractor associations (the Labor Relations Division of the RI Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, the New England Mechanical Contractors' Ass'n, the RI Mason Contractors' Ass'n, and the RI and Southeast MA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Ass'n), and sixteen (16) Local Trade Unions that make up the Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council representing an approximately 10,000 local tradesmen and women. On behalf of our organization, I write in SUPPORT of the above referred to legislation for the reasons that follow.

Rhode Island taxpayers have made a once-in-a-generation investment in public education. Nearly \$6 billion has been invested in rebuilding and modernizing public school facilities across our communities. These schools were approved to meet RIDE's student enrollment and capacity standards and designed to deliver high-quality academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming.

Approving new charter school seats, whether it be through establishing new schools or expanding existing, at this moment would divert students away from these newly constructed, state-of-the-art public schools and into unproven educational institutions, leaving seats empty in buildings taxpayers have already paid for. These facilities were built precisely to meet current and future student needs. They deserve the time and stability necessary to demonstrate their effectiveness.

These facilities have been designed with the thoughtful inclusion of CTE pathways in these new and like-new schools. Before the state begins approving charter school seats focused solely on CTE pathways, we should first analyze whether the State should increase their investments and look to expand already proven institutions who concentrate on CTE pathways like William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School in Lincoln, Providence Career and Technical Academy, and Cranston's Apprenticeship Exploration School. These institutions maintain annual waiting lists, as students are eager to secure these highly sought-after CTE seats. Instead of creating new charter schools and once again diverting resources


toward unproven concepts, our state and communities should prioritize expanding capacity at these institutions within the traditional public school models they already successfully operate.

Charter expansion does not come with new funding. Instead, it creates an unfunded mandate on sending communities, forcing municipalities to absorb the financial impact while still carrying fixed costs such as staffing, transportation, special education, and building operations. This shifts the burden directly onto local taxpayers and school budgets, weakening the very system Rhode Islanders just invested billions to rebuild.

By continuing to allow for new charter school seats to be approved, the State is creating uncertainty within our public education and risks perpetuating the cycle of chronic underfunding that led to decades of school deterioration in the first place. At a time when students are finally learning in the schools they deserve, approving new charter school seats pulls resources away and undermines the return on a historic public investment.

For these reasons, BuildRI, and our partners, urge the Senate Education Committee to approve Chairwoman Murray's SB 2784. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Thank you,



Anthony J. Cherry  
Assistant Executive Director  
Build Rhode Island