

Angel's Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 2786

April 8, 2026

To the Senate Education Committee Chair and Members,

My name is Angel Lopez, and I am a resident of Providence, RI. I am writing to you today in opposition to Senate Bill 2786. I oppose the Student Computer Device Privacy Bill because the legislative language continues to lack the necessary clarity to be fiscally responsible.

To begin, the definitions of an "Educational Institution," "School District," and "Student" describe the who, which includes any public institution and its students or enrolled trainees of a workforce training program. The expense projections for monitoring the electronic devices provided by the school may be estimated easily with a low margin of variance. However, budget estimates become unrealistic when the language includes the "Personal Device" of a student. A term defined as any electronic device provided by the end user being used for educational purposes.

The inclusion of "personal devices" will immediately impact every family that shares devices. Does any sponsor of this bill have a rough number of personal devices per middle school classroom? Also, how does that number change per school? If this bill was already a well-known state law, under what circumstances, will an uncle, aunt, older cousin, or neighbor be willing to lend a device to a public-school student to complete a school project? The bill as written is calling out public school students as residents to be monitored instead of residents working towards becoming productive members of society.

Section two of this bill adds another broad term "educational purposes" and lists the term as a reason to activate the audio or video transmitting, receiving, or recording functions of the electronic device of a student. The lack of clarity for the term "Educational purposes" is leaving the already blurred line between education, entertainment, and business in the hands of the school district to dictate. This not only increases the costs of monitoring the personal devices of students it will also create privacy violations for many families. Is this committee going to allow the school districts to decide if religion is considered an educational purpose or will you push the sponsors for clarity before the bill is moved out of the committee for a vote.

Before privacy violations even begin, how will the school identify the personal electronic devices of the student body? Who and how much is a school willing to pay to maintain the list of active personal devices? This bill also fails to prohibit Student Resource Officers and police departments from

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monitoring the personal devices of students which would result in violations of the 4th Amendment rights.

To further support my perspective, refer to lines two through five of page three. That subsection details the circumstance when the location data for tracking a student device can be accessed if a student or parental guardian notify the device is missing or stolen. That section (a)(2) only applies to devices issued by the school and conveniently leaves out the personal devices purchased by the parent or student. Locating a missing or stolen personal device is not worth the expense for a school but somehow, the costs of watching and listening to students via the personal devices of students, is a justifiable education expense.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 2786 will add a new and unknown expense item to every public school, educational program, and non-profit workforce development program within RI. It will also create barriers to education for students who already live in neighborhoods plagued with mass incarceration. Both reasons will negatively impact the success rate of every public education program in RI. Please halt the passage of this bill until the legislative language ensures that students and parents are the primary beneficiaries.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

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