

From: [Amanda Duhoski](#)
To: [SLegislation](#)
Subject: S2787-Charter Moratorium & Cap Reduction
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Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Bill S2787, which proposes a charter school moratorium and cap reduction in Rhode Island. I believe this legislation is an important step toward stabilizing public education funding and ensuring that neighborhood public schools remain strong, equitable, and fully resourced.

Public schools serve every student who walks through the door, including students with the highest academic, behavioral, and special education needs. However, Rhode Island has developed a fragmented parallel school system that diverts resources away from neighborhood public schools. The state now operates more than 60 education entities, including 24 charter LEAs, each with separate administrative and operational costs, creating duplication and financial strain across the system.

Rhode Island also has one of the highest concentrations of charter enrollment in the Northeast relative to the size of its public education system. While the state serves approximately 140,000 students, roughly 13,000 are enrolled in charter schools. Unlike Massachusetts, which caps charter tuition impacts at 9% of district spending (with limited exceptions up to 18%), Rhode Island has no comparable fiscal protections to prevent long-term strain on municipalities.

These impacts are especially significant in urban districts. According to RI House Fiscal data (FY2025), charter and state school enrollment includes 27.6% of Providence students, 40.8% in Central Falls, 22.8% in Pawtucket, and 11% in Woonsocket. These shifts represent substantial and ongoing transfers of both students and funding away from district public schools, contributing to fiscal instability in communities that already face the highest student need.

Rhode Island is also experiencing declining enrollment while continuing to invest heavily in school construction and modernization. Expanding parallel systems during enrollment decline raises serious concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability and planning.

Originally, charter schools were envisioned as small-scale innovation centers intended to share best practices with public schools. Today, Rhode Island is no longer operating a limited innovation model — it is sustaining a permanent parallel system. Traditional public schools continue to serve the majority of high-need students, including those with disabilities, while funding continues to shift away from districts.

In addition, district schools must continue serving all students, even when students return mid-year from charter schools without corresponding funding adjustments. During recent testimony, a charter operator acknowledged removing students who did not meet behavioral expectations — something traditional public schools are not permitted to do. At the same time, approximately 60% of Rhode Island charter schools receive only one- or two-star ratings under the state accountability system.

These realities highlight the need for thoughtful policy review and fiscal guardrails. I respectfully urge you to support Bill S2787 to ensure Rhode Island prioritizes sustainable investment in neighborhood public schools and equitable opportunities for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Duhoski

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