

From: [Arlette Hidalgo](#)
To: [SLegislation](#)
Subject: Opposition to H7415/S2787
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Dear Senate,

I hope you are doing well.

I am writing to respectfully ask you to oppose bills **H7415 and S2787**, which propose banning new charter schools and limiting their expansion in Rhode Island.

I want to share my perspective not only as an educator, but as someone whose life was directly impacted by the opportunity charter schools provide.

When I returned to the United States from the Dominican Republic, I came with one dream: to become a teacher. However, I quickly realized how difficult it was to navigate the system. No one explained how to evaluate my transcripts or what pathways existed for someone like me. I reached out to many schools, hoping for an opportunity to complete my student teaching.

The only school that opened its doors to me was Highlander Charter School.

That opportunity changed my life.

At Highlander, I was able to complete my student teaching, grow professionally, and eventually work as a special education teacher. As a Dominican, bilingual educator, I was also able to represent something many of my students had never seen before someone who looked like them, spoke their language, and understood their culture. That representation matters deeply.

There is a misconception that charter schools do not support students with disabilities. In my experience as a special education teacher, I saw strong support systems, collaboration, and a deep commitment to meeting students' needs.

Additionally, for many immigrant families, charter schools represent opportunity. Coming from a country where education is often divided between public and private systems, many families see charter schools as an option for quality education one that offers smaller environments and different approaches that may better meet their children's needs.

This is not just about opening new charter schools. It is about preserving the ability for families to choose the educational setting that works best for their children. Not every child thrives in the same environment, and that decision should belong to families not be limited by policy.

We are also facing a significant shortage of educators. Charter schools have created pathways for educators like me—especially those coming from other countries to enter the profession, contribute, and grow. I now actively encourage other educators with similar backgrounds to pursue these opportunities, because they restore hope and create access to the field.

Charter schools opened a door for me when no one else did. Because of that opportunity, I am now able to serve students, support families, and contribute to education in Rhode Island.

I respectfully urge you to consider stories like mine when making your decision on **H7415 and S2787**. Limiting charter schools would not only affect systems it would impact real people, real families, and real opportunities.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our communities.

Sincerely,
Arlette Hidalgo