



11 May 2026

Testimony in Support of S 2787

Dear Chair Hanna Gallo and the members of the Senate Education Committee,

We are writing today in support of S 2787.

S 2787 establishes a cap on the total number of charter schools and installs a moratorium on new charter school development. This legislation is essential because the unchecked development of charter schools is not in the interest of our students or the state. A robust body of research finds that charter schools do not result in better student outcomes on average than do traditional public schools, and in fact outcomes can be worse.¹ A study examining charter schools in Massachusetts and North Carolina, for instance, found that charter school expansion reduced enrollment in public schools without increasing academic achievement.²

These reductions in public school enrollment have consequences. Because schools have fixed costs for physical plant and for per-building personnel, removal of students from public schools increases per-student costs without increasing base school funding, resulting in a decrease in resources available for those students who remain in traditional public schools, a problem exacerbated in districts seeing population declines.³ Charter schools have also been demonstrated to decrease students' exposure to racially-diverse classmates⁴ and to reduce the racial diversity of typical public schools.⁵

Charter schools often do not have the capacity to support our highest-need students. Even where charter schools comply with legal requirements around access for students with disabilities, many simply do not have the resources or expertise to provide for multiply-disabled students, disabled students who are also multi-language learners, or those with the most severe disabilities.⁶ Some disabled students, including those with behavioral problems that limit their ability to adhere to strict codes of conduct, are "counseled out" of charter schools. The significant costs of educating these students remain with public school districts, which further squeezes the financial resources left in the public sector. S 2787 is important legislation

¹ <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1383840>

² <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20190457>

³ <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED662926>

⁴ <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20190682>

⁵ <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20190457>

⁶ <https://www.centerforlearnerequity.org/wp-content/uploads/CLE-Charter-Sustainability-Study-Web-Executive-Summary-July-2024.pdf>; <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED662926>



because it provides the framework for effectively addressing the fiscal problems that charter schools can cause.

The real goals of the charter school movement are union busting and public disinvestment. Charter schools seek to reduce teacher power, deskill education professionals, and divert funds away from community schools toward profit-making corporations or outside service providers. Public funds should go to public schools, schools that serve our local communities and protect the labor rights of their employees. As residents of RI, educators, and union members, we strongly support both bills and urge you to pass S 2787.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mikaila".

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, Ph.D.
President, RIC/AFT Local 1819

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Vincent Bohlinger".

Vincent Bohlinger, Ph.D.
Vice President, RIC/AFT Local 1819
Chair, Committee on Political Education, RIC/AFT Local 1819