

May 19, 2026

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Lindsay Paiva, I use she/her pronouns, and I am writing today in opposition to Bill S2934. I am the Providence Teachers Union President-Elect, a Providence community member and homeowner, community organizer, and a third grade teacher of multilingual learners in Providence Public Schools. This bill represents a complete and utter disrespect for organized labor and the hardworking educators of this city. Time and time again, we have been scapegoated for the perceived failure of Providence Public Schools, but this is a new era for the Providence Teachers Union and for our students and families.

PTU is reclaiming our role in the narrative of education in our city, starting to have a presence in district-wide conversations and in the media again, and showing the public and the district that our schools are more than RIDE report card scores, that our teachers and students are more than some convoluted star rating. There is incredible teaching and learning happening in classrooms across the district every day despite the conditions we are facing.

The thesis of this bill is that Providence teachers are the main problem in our schools, not decades of underfunding, the ruthless cutting of social emotional learning programs and staff, inexperienced and incompetent administrators, and top down decisionmaking from leaders who are more interested in lining the pockets of consultants and software companies than securing real results for our students.

Teachers have been completely villainized, mistreated, and de-professionalized during this takeover and that sentiment is reflected in the text of this bill. Instead of adding more to teachers' plates, we should be analyzing the already impossible asks the district makes of us every day.

Since the takeover began, I have seen the expertise and autonomy I previously experienced slowly slip away. Programs that once supported educator growth and mentorship have been dismantled, and teacher recruitment and retention have flatlined. The district has continued to make unilateral decisions on behalf of PTU members, students, and families with no transparency and accountability for far too long.

This bill gives way too much power to school administrators to make decisions that could have a lasting impact on students, families, and educators. In a district where retaliation and fearmongering are commonplace and administrators already exercise excessive power over their employees, this bill gives the Superintendent a free pass to dismiss teachers that principals dislike. Teachers who advocate or speak up are already targeted and intimidated on a daily basis. This is not a monarchy, and we are not disposable.

We have already seen a drain of talent and mass exodus of educators from Providence since the takeover began, and the district can barely recruit and retain enough teachers to fill our current vacancies. This bill would exacerbate the teacher shortage and weaken job protections that decades of PTU members have fought to secure. The salary scale is already woefully inadequate, and we can barely afford to pay our bills with our current pay.

Let's refocus our energy on the true challenges in PPSD. No more scarcity narrative that there is not enough money or resources to fully fund our schools and to provide Providence teachers with the salaries and benefits they deserve. No more budget and hiring freezes while central office bloat continues unchecked. No more culture of repression and fear. No more silencing of PTU member voices and removing us from decision-making processes.

Thank you for your time, and please oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Paiva