

The Honorable Louis DiPalma
Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: OPPOSITION to 2026 – S 2139, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- FOUNDATION
LEVEL SCHOOL SUPPORT

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of STEPS, we respectfully oppose S2139.

The students we serve are already navigating significant economic barriers.

For them, access to additional educational support is not guaranteed—it is often out of reach.

S2139 risks compounding that inequity.

If Rhode Island does not act in a timely way, the result will be straightforward: Resources connected to this federal program will benefit students in other states—while the students we serve receive nothing.

That outcome would disproportionately affect low-income families.

We work with students who have the drive and ability to succeed, but whose opportunities are limited by what their families can afford.

When support is available, it makes a measurable difference.

STEPS serves students attending: The Grace School at Meeting Street (144), Community Preparatory School (137), San Miguel School (64), and Sophia Academy (64).

Population served: The overwhelming majority of these students receive substantial scholarships. At Community Prep it's over 90%, San Miguel 100%, Sophia (100%) and Grace (75%). I would also estimate that the bulk of these families (80%) live in Providence and the schools save RI taxpayers a substantial sum of money each year. In addition, the 4 schools employ 117 workers who are themselves RI taxpayers and voters.

Rhode Island should not allow a situation where families with the greatest need are excluded from available support while those resources flow elsewhere.

We respectfully urge you to oppose S2139.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Corley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Corley
President of STEPS