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STAFF

Karen Flanagan
Executive Director
kflanagan@starkidsprogram.org
Lindsey Haslam
Program Director
lhaslam@starkidsprogram.org
Briana Lachapelle
Program Coordinator
blachapelle@starkidsprogram.org

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

RE: OPPOSITION to 2026 – S2139, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION --
FOUNDATION
LEVEL SCHOOL SUPPORT

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

Star Kids Scholarship Program respectfully opposes S2139. We focus on helping at-risk, low-income students, who have a parent(s) with a history of incarceration and/or substance abuse, reach their full potential—and we have seen how access to timely support can change a student's path.

Opportunities in education are often time-sensitive. When a student gets the help they need at the right moment, it can change outcomes. When they don't, that opportunity may not come again.

S2139 creates a risk that low-income Rhode Island students will miss out on a program that will be operating elsewhere.

We have worked with low-income students who, after receiving educational support from Star Kids at a critical moment, were able to shift their trajectory—from struggling academically to preparing for college.

If Rhode Island delays participation, those kinds of turning points may not be available to students here.

Star Kids serves low-income students attending non-public and public schools including: Moses Brown, Bishop Hendricken, La Salle, The Prout School, St. Philomena School, Pennfield School, All Satins Academy and more.

Population served: We serve at-risk students in grades K – 12. All Star Kids (who have an average age of 12) come from low-income families.

Seventy-six percent (76%) have a parent with a history of incarceration, and 93% have at least one parent with a history of substance abuse. One-hundred percent (100%) have a demonstrated financial need. On average a student is in our program for 11 years.

[P.O. Box 6214 ~ Middletown, RI 02842 ~ 401.848.4187 ~ starkidsprogram.org](mailto:kflanagan@starkidsprogram.org)

Rhode Island students should not lose access to opportunities that will be available to students in other states.

We respectfully urge you to oppose S2139.

Sincerely,



Karen Flanagan
Executive Director
Star Kids Scholarship Program
401-848-4187
kflanagan@starkidsprogram.org

