

Senator Louis DiPalma, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee State
House Providence, RI

May 19, 2026

Testimony in Support of S2245 Relating to Education - School Social Worker Ratio

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Senate Finance Committee Members:

The National Association of Social Workers, RI Chapter (NASW-RI) is in strong support of S2245 Relating to Education - School Social Worker Ratio filed by Senator Sosnowski. We are championing this bill because it will improve the lives of children and families throughout the state. Specifically, S2245 will: 1) increase access to social workers in schools, 2) create more opportunities for health and wellness for students and their families through increased access to professionals who are trained to help and support them, and 3) decrease the rate of children diagnosed with mental health illnesses¹.

Access to school social work is critical to the success of students in schools and beyond. School social workers play a vital role in fostering a safe, supportive, and nurturing educational environment for the students they serve, while also addressing the challenges students may face. A National Association of Social Workers national task force determined at a minimum, there should be one school social worker for every 250 students, per district, in order to adequately meet the needs of students in schools.

Currently 1 in 5 children in the United States experience a mental illness, which can include anxiety, depression, and behavioral health problems. Many students also experience serious life challenges like abuse or neglect, which can lead to long term negative outcomes on their mental and physical health. School social workers can help mitigate adverse effects through early intervention and prevention, connection to vital community and support services, and crisis intervention at school. This, in turn, will improve the academic performance of students and change their lives for the better.

We urge you to pass S2245 and increase access to the vital services school social workers provide. If you have any questions or would like to follow up further, we would be glad to connect with you.

Sincerely,



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¹ NASW IL Policy Proposal for Enhancing School Social Work Staffing Ratios, 2024, p. 4