



# Providence Student Union

*Building student power*

763R Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903

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TO: Senate Finance Committee  
FROM: Providence Student Union  
DATE: May 18, 2026  
SUBJECT: SUPPORT for the School Social Worker Bill (S-2245)

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the Providence Student Union (PSU), we are writing in support of the School Social Worker bill (S-2245). This bill increases access to school social workers by requiring one full-time social worker for every 250 students in K–12 public schools by 2030. This goal is in alignment with the National Association of School Social Workers' recommendations and a step in the right direction for the well-being of young people in Rhode Island.

Based on the feedback of our youth leadership, Providence Student Union (PSU) stands in support of efforts to increase state funding for school-based mental and behavioral health services. Real safe, healthy and equitable schools promote and prioritize the mental health and well being of students through counselors, nurses and other social, emotional and physical health providers. Research has demonstrated that schools with these services see improved attendance rates, lower rates of suspensions and other disciplinary incidents, improved school safety and higher graduation rates.

We believe that increased funding for school social workers is a step in the right direction in the face of the severe mental health crisis in our state (and across the country). In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), and the Children's Hospital Association (CHA) declared that we are facing a national emergency in children's mental health. Unfortunately, youth continue to suffer in Rhode Island, where more than one-third of children in need of mental health treatment struggle to obtain the care they need. In response to this critical situation, we need a robust continuum of care supporting students, including but not limited to school social workers.

We are urging you to support S-2245 to support the holistic well-being and development of young people in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Providence Student Union