



May 19, 2026

The Honorable Senator Louis P. DiPalma, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SENATE BILL 2548 - AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

Chair DiPalma and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2548. The League appreciates the bill's focus on strengthening targeted components of Rhode Island's education funding system, particularly as they relate to special education, high-cost student services, career and technical education, and transportation-related expenditures.

Senate Bill 2548 makes important refinements to the state's approach to reimbursing extraordinary special education costs by updating cost thresholds and improving the state's ability to identify and analyze high-cost outlier cases. These changes represent a constructive effort to better define and understand extraordinary educational expenses and to ensure that state support is directed in a more consistent and transparent manner.

The League also supports the bill's recognition of the fiscal pressures that arise when districts receive students with significant needs after local budgets have already been adopted. The provision allowing for additional reimbursement in these circumstances is an important step toward improving fairness and responsiveness in the funding system, particularly for municipalities and school districts that must absorb unanticipated costs mid-year.

In addition, the League appreciates the bill's continued investment in career and technical education and early childhood education programs. These initiatives are essential to expanding student opportunity and aligning educational pathways with Rhode Island's workforce needs. Likewise, provisions related to transportation funding and stabilization support for specific districts reflect the importance of addressing structural cost drivers that vary across communities.

While this bill represents a positive step forward, it addresses only part of a broader challenge. To meaningfully expand opportunity for all students, Rhode Island will ultimately require a more comprehensive and integrated approach to education finance reform. Accordingly, while the League supports the improvements included in Senate Bill 2548, we believe House Bill 8351 and Senate Bill 3015 offer a more complete framework for funding reform that would better position schools and districts to meet the full range of student needs.

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns supports Senate Bill 2548, while also encouraging continued consideration of broader education funding reforms that strengthen long-term equity, predictability, and sustainability.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Finance Committee