



Conexión Latina

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To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Rebekah Gomez, Executive Director, Conexión Latina Newport.

Date: May 19, 2026

Re: Bill Number, S3015 : THE RHODE ISLAND EDUCATION FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT ”

Dear Chairperson DiPalma and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Rebekah Gomez and I am the founder and Executive Director of Conexión Latina in Newport, RI. I am writing in support of school funding reform based on the recommendations of Rhode Island's Blue Ribbon Commission and ask that you vote to approve the RI Education Funding and Accountability Act, bill S3015.

On the last day of teacher appreciation week, just roughly 10 days ago, Newport public schools administration pink slipped and issued non-renewal of contract letters to over 40 teachers, many of them MLL teachers. These cuts were all made due to a huge budget shortfall that they need to make up for, as well as future increased budgeted costs for our high incidence of MLL and special needs students. As you can imagine, the school committee meeting the following week was packed with angry teachers, parents and community members. But the school committee, having little control over their funding, had to pass the buck to the City Council and their budget. So the angry mob will show up at the city council budget meeting happening tonight, only to find out that their hands are also tied. Tied by the state's 15 year old funding formula. It is time to change that funding formula so that districts can realistically meet the needs of the unique make up of children they actually serve, pay for the full cost of education, require fair local contributions from residents, and transparency & accountability so that everyone can see that their tax dollars are building the future.

As a community leader with strong ties to families that rely on MLL services, I can tell you that families are frustrated that their children are not currently receiving the services they are due. If Rhode Island does not start providing fair funding for our schools, these services will remain at a bare minimum, if at all, and our communities will suffer the consequences. I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 3015 and enact the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations into law.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rebekah

Rebekah Gomez
Executive Director, Conexión Latina