

**To:** Senate Finance Committee

**From:** Rebecca Silver, PhD

**Date:** 5/21/26

**Re:** Support for S-3015

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My name is Rebecca Silver. I am a resident of Providence and a licensed psychologist specializing in infant and early childhood mental health. As a parent of children in the Providence Public Schools and given my many roles within the Rhode Island infant and early childhood service delivery system (e.g., therapist, mental health consultant, professional development provider, researcher, program director), I know that we do not have educational equity in this state. I therefore endorse the Right from the Start Campaign's (among other organizations) **support of S-3015 to update the school funding formula.**

This bill (S-3015) would make important adjustments to the school funding formula, as recommended by Blue Ribbon Commission on Education Funding. This bill will reallocate funds in a way that strives towards greater educational equity in our state so that all children, regardless of zip code, have access to the education and educational support they need to be successful and that they deserve.

As a parent of children in PPSD, I see the daily impact of inadequate and inequitable school funding. Among a myriad of issues, kids enrolled in PPSD sometimes lack access to basic school supplies (e.g., paper, books), there is insufficient access to (short-term and long-term) substitute teachers, and extracurricular/afterschool activities often teeter on the edge of losing funding/staffing. Children with special educational needs (e.g., MLL and children with IEPs) do not have adequate access to the support they need to be successful. These types of issues are not universal across school districts, but inequitably, instead cluster among districts with a higher concentration of poverty.

As an early childhood professional, I am most excited about the ways this bill addresses inadequate funding and systems to screen, evaluate, and deliver early childhood special education services required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Right now, access to developmental screenings, eligibility evaluations, and services vary significantly by the city/town where children live, with children in higher poverty communities being less likely to receive a screening, less likely to be evaluated, less likely to be determined eligible for services, and less likely to receive their IDEA services in an inclusive early childhood setting.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony and my recommendation to **support of S-3015 to update the school funding formula.**

Sincerely,

Rebecca Silver, PhD