



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: Senate Finance Committee
From: Maribeth Calabro, President
Date: April 28, 2026
Re: Central Falls Governance Transition & Stabilization Funding Reform
Testimony in Support of 2026-S 3214 (Senator Acosta, et. al.)

Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Maribeth Calabro, and I am the President of the RIFTHP, representing over 12,000 workers, including the resolute educators and staff who serve the Central Falls School District.

I am here today to express our full support for S 3214, a critical piece of legislation that ensures the long-term viability of the transition to local governance in Central Falls.

For over three decades, Central Falls has been the only district in Rhode Island governed by a state-appointed Board of Trustees. S 3214 formally repeals § 16-2-34, which established that trusteeship.

By repealing this section, we are finally allowing the recently sworn-in hybrid school board—composed of elected members and community-appointed representatives—to take full control on July 1, 2026. Our members believe all stakeholders, community, families, students and educators should have a seat at the table and their voices heard.

The most vital component of S 3214 is the creation of a predictable and sustainable funding framework.

The Central Falls Stabilization Fund established in this bill addresses the city's limited property tax base by ensuring the state continues to cover high-cost expenditures.

This fund will specifically cover tuition payments for outplaced special education students and tuition to other public schools, preventing these variable costs from destabilizing the district's local budget.

As a 30-year educator of differently abled students, I know that true student success requires more than just local pride; it requires financial security. S 3214 provides the legal and fiscal bridge necessary to move Central Falls from state oversight to a successful, independent future.

RIFTHP urges this Committee to pass S 3214 and secure the future of Central Falls schools.

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