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## Rhode Island Works Best When We Say UNION YES.

April 28, 2026

Chairman Louis P. DiPalma  
 Senate Committee on Finance  
 Rhode Island State House  
 Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for S3214 – An Act Relating to Education – School Committees and Superintendents

Dear Chairman DiPalma and the Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

On behalf of the 80,000 members of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and our affiliated local unions, I write in support of Senate Bill 3214, introduced by Senator Acosta to advance the return of Central Falls schools to local control.

The Rhode Island AFL-CIO has more than a thousand union members who live, work, and raise families in Central Falls. Our members are deeply connected to the public education system as educators, school staff, construction workers, healthcare providers, and parents of public school students. They have a direct stake in the success of the public school system and deserve a meaningful voice in how their schools are governed.

After more than three decades of state control, it is clear that while progress has been made, long-term success requires local ownership and accountability. The Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study the Return of Central Falls Schools to Local Governance carefully examined the governance, fiscal, and educational issues involved in this transition. Its final report recognizes that Central Falls has made meaningful progress, that there is broad community support for a return to local governance, and that any transition should include appropriate safeguards, oversight, and a sustainable funding framework.

This bill would repeal the current statutory structure governing the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees and ensure that local control is restored while maintaining a strong state-local partnership. The bill recognizes the structural inequities facing Central Falls and establishes a stable and predictable funding framework, including the Central Falls Stabilization Fund to protect students and workers.

S3214 recognizes the need for continued coordination among the City, State, and Local School District and Board, which includes, enhanced reporting and oversight during the initial transition period, continued training and support, and a clear contribution framework that allows the City to increase its local investment without undermining its overall fiscal stability. These provisions are essential to ensuring that workers in the school system have the stability and resources they need to do their jobs effectively.

Returning Central Falls schools to local governance is a matter of fairness, accountability, and equity. Local control will strengthen civic engagement, give families and residents a direct voice in the future of their public schools, and align educational decision-making with the needs and priorities of the Central Falls community.

Lastly, this legislation appropriately recognizes that the State must remain a partner in ensuring adequate and equitable funding for Central Falls students. For these reasons, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO urges your support for Senate Bill 3214 to advance the return of Central Falls schools to local control.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica A. Hammond  
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