



To: House Committee on Education  
From: Erich Haslehurst  
Date: April 8, 2025  
Re: H5840 – RELATING TO EDUCATION -- ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the National Education Association Rhode Island and our 12,000 members to express our strong support for H5840, introduced by Representative Casey.

This proposed bill aims to establish a "union neutrality clause" for the renewal of existing charter schools or the application of new charter schools. The clause would require charters to maintain a neutral stance on the unionization of their employees, prohibiting them from expressing any position on the matter.

Furthermore, the bill specifies that charters cannot threaten, intimidate, discriminate against, retaliate against, or take adverse actions against employees based on their decision to support or oppose union representation. It emphasizes that all workers have the right to join a union without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. When teachers and other education professionals have a voice in the workplace, they are better equipped to advocate for their students and communities. Unfortunately, many organizations invest significant resources in hiring outside union-busting firms to discourage employees from organizing when they attempt to form a union.

As charter schools are funded by taxpayers, it is crucial that these funds are allocated towards educating students rather than towards union-busting activities. The bill seeks to prevent charter schools from using taxpayer funds to infringe on their employees' right to organize, ensuring that educators have a stronger voice in the education system for the benefit of students, educators, and communities.

In light of the current limitations placed on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) by the Trump administration, this bill is essential in safeguarding the rights of charter school employees to organize. It establishes a process where if a majority of the bargaining unit expresses a desire to join a union, the employer must recognize them without the need for an election.

For these reasons, we encourage you to pass H5459.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erich Haslehurst