

# Testimony in Opposition of 2025 -- H6034

## Submitted to the House Education Committee

**Dear Chair McNamara and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Chiara Deltito-Sharrott, and I am the Executive Director of the Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools. I am providing testimony to express strong opposition to House Bill 6034.

First, it is important to remember that in Rhode Island, charter public schools are part of the public education system. Our teachers are public school teachers. Our students are public school students. And like all public schools, charter public schools are tuition-free, public, and open to all children regardless of their educational needs. In fact, charter public schools serve a higher percentage of multilingual learners and economically disadvantaged children than the average public school in our state.

Our community of schools has been working alongside our district public school peers to strengthen our public education system for almost 30 years now. And we should be proud that time and time again, impartial academic studies from Stanford and other institutions show that Rhode Island's charter public schools are making a difference for kids, and are a model for what charter public schooling should look like across our country.

Yet at this moment, we, as part of the public education community, find our schools under attack. Alongside our district public school peers, every morning, our school leaders, teachers, families, and students awaken to new headlines outlining policies that threaten to undermine our public education resources, and civil rights protections for our students, and weaken our ability to assess students' academic progress and engage in critical education research. And in the midst of so much fear in many of our communities, our public school leaders and teachers are on the front lines, every day, trying to keep members of their school communities safe, and ensuring that every child is seen and respected for who they are.

In normal times, I would be before you today solely arguing against the many bad aspects of this bill. Charter public schools—especially network schools—have played a critical role in providing high-quality educational opportunities to students across our state, particularly those who are traditionally underserved or face systemic barriers. H 6034 would effectively cap



growth and **innovation** in this sector, cutting off proven pathways for student success. Rhode Island General Law defines network charter public schools as schools with an elementary AND a secondary school or multiple elementary/secondary schools<sup>1</sup>. This bill would disproportionately and negatively impact the charter public schools in our state that serve the most at-risk and highest needs population of students (schools like Times2 STEM Academy, Paul Cuffee School, and Highlander Charter School, to name a few). Network charter schools often provide operational support, data systems, professional development, and curriculum design that help ensure **consistent academic excellence** across campuses. These supports allow educators to focus more on teaching and learning while ensuring that every student, regardless of zip code, has access to a school that works.

But these are not normal times. While I have still managed to give you all the reasons why this legislation is bad for kids, bad for families, and bad for our commitment as a state to make educational decisions that are based on the needs of our students, not politics, I am really here to implore you on broader grounds.

Please don't look to further harm an important part of our public education community in Rhode Island. We are already fighting with all we've got based on what is happening at the federal level. Please don't unintentionally undermine the charter public schools that have been faithfully serving and supporting our kids and families for close to 30 years. Right now, more than ever, we need to come together regardless of public school type, to keep our educators, students, and families at the center. Please give us the opportunity to keep fighting for their rights, their resources, for their dignity, and not have to redirect that energy and time to fighting legislation like House Bill 6034.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Chiara Deltito-Sharrott  
Executive Director of Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools

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<sup>1</sup> Section § 16-77-3.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-77 entitled "Establishment of Charter Public Schools"