

## **Testimony in Opposition of 2025 – HB6034**

*Submitted to the House Education Committee*

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### **House Committee on Education**

Rhode Island General Assembly

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

### **RE: Evidence-Based Opposition to HB 6034**

Dear Chairperson McNamara and Members of the Committee,

As a Providence parent whose child waited five years for a charter school seat - five years of watching her potential go untapped in a traditional public school. Today, as an Excel Academy parent, I've seen her blossom from struggling to exceeding expectations over 2 years in math and ELA. My family's story isn't unique - it's why I strongly oppose HB 6034. Today, I urge you to reject HB 6034 based on compelling evidence from Rhode Island's own experience:

#### **1. Demonstrated Academic Success**

- 78% of RI charter schools outperformed their district counterparts in English Language Arts growth (2023 RI School Report Cards, RIDE)
- Charter students showed 12% higher college enrollment rates (National Student Clearinghouse, 2022)

#### **2. Serving Vulnerable Populations**

- Network charters serve 18% more low-income students than the state average (2024 RI Charter School Demographic Report)
- Schools like Times2 STEM (87% low-income) and Paul Cuffee (71% low-income) exceed district poverty rates

### **3. Overwhelming Demand**

- 3,217 students currently on charter waitlists (RI Department of Education, March 2025)
- 62% of waitlisted families qualify for free/reduced lunch (RI Charter School Coalition)

HB 6034 would harm the very communities it claims to protect by:

- Freezing enrollment while traditional schools still struggle (only 42% of RI district schools meet ELA proficiency standards)
- Preventing replication of successful models
- Ignoring parent demand demonstrated by waitlist data

Instead of arbitrary caps, we should:

- ✓ Equitably fund all public school models
- ✓ Share best practices between charters and district schools
- ✓ Expand access to proven programs

The evidence is clear: charter schools provide quality options Rhode Island families desperately want and need. I urge you to vote NO on HB 6034.

Respectfully submitted,



**DeNeil Jones**

Parent, Excel Academy

### **Sources Cited:**

1. Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) School Report Cards
2. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center
3. RI Charter School Demographic Annual Report
4. RI Charter School Coalition Waitlist Data