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## House Committee on Education

Rhode Island General Assembly  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

April 10th, 2025

Dear Chairperson McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Jimena Carmona, and I am an alumna of Providence public schools and the office manager at Stop The Wait RI. I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 6034, which would severely limit the future of network charter schools in Rhode Island by banning the approval of new schools and blocking the growth of those already serving our communities.

Charter schools are important to me because I've seen firsthand how the quality of education can shape a student's future. I went through the Providence public school system from elementary all the way through Mount Pleasant High School. At the time, I didn't think much about the quality of education I was receiving — it was all I knew. But that changed when I got to URI.

In college, I realized just how unprepared I was. Writing papers, studying for exams, managing the workload — it felt like I was constantly playing catch-up. Meanwhile, my peers who had attended private or charter schools seemed to handle everything with ease. That experience opened my eyes. I was proud to be there, but I couldn't ignore how different my academic foundation was compared to theirs.

Now, as a mother of a five-year-old who will be starting kindergarten this fall, this has become even more personal. I recently went through the charter school lottery process, and on April 1st, I received the dreaded waitlist email. That moment filled me with anxiety because I know what's at stake. Thankfully by the end of the day he was offered a seat at a different school. The relief I felt was indescribable.

As a single mother, I knew I couldn't afford private school or just pack up and change zip codes, so this gave me hope. I don't want my son to struggle the way I did. I want him to have access to a strong academic foundation from the very beginning — one that sets him up for confidence, opportunity, success, not just survival.

However i still think about all the families still waiting, without that same outcome. I'm sure you are all aware of the thousands — of families who are waitlisted every year, families who just like mine don't have the privilege or resources to move or pay for private schools just to give their child a better shot at a better education. We all deserve the right to choose a school that offers high-quality education. Passing this bill would only limit those choices and leave more families without options. We deserve better. WE deserve options.

I urge you to vote against House Bill 6034 and focus on advancing policies that enhance accountability and quality, while ensuring that access and opportunity are not restricted. Every child deserves an education that meets their unique needs, and every parent deserves the right to choose the learning environment that will help their child thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jimena Carmona*