

**Lisa Cataldi**

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**From:** Selena Mena <selmena28@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025 2:36 PM  
**To:** House Education Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony in Opposition of 2025 – HB6034

Selena Mena  
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House Committee on Education  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony Opposing H 6034 – An Act Relating to the  
Establishment of Charter Public Schools

Dear Chairperson McNamara and Members of the House  
Education Committee,

My name is Selena Mena parent of Achievement  
First in Providence. I write to express my strong opposition  
to House Bill 6034, which would limit the future of network  
charter schools in Rhode Island by banning the approval of  
new network charter schools and blocking the expansion of  
existing ones.

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. This bill would disproportionately and negatively impact the charter public schools in our state who serve the most at-risk and highest needs population of students (schools like Times2 STEM Academy, Paul Cuffee School, 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.

This bill threatens to undo years of progress and disadvantage schools that are near and dear in our communities. The proposed cap also contradicts the original legislative intent of the charter school law, which called for schools to serve as “vanguards” and “laboratories” for educational innovation.

I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill and continue supporting schools that are delivering results and giving families real choices. Our kids—and our communities—deserve that.

Please stand with Rhode Island families and students who depend on strong public school options. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Selena Mena

Parent of an achievement first student