

To: House Finance Committee
House Bill No.8047 RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN
OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
From: Ayana Melvan
RE: Testimony in Strong Support of House Bill No.8047
Date: May 9, 2024

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Ayana Melvan and I'm a Westerly, Rhode Island resident and Rhode Island Afterschool Alliance Alum. I am sending you this written testimony in support of HB.8047 introduced by Rep Shallcross Smith, which provides \$4 million to support after school and school vacation, summer learning workforce development programs for K-12 students with annual reports on status and programs.

This bill is important to me because:

- I've been actively advocating for Rhode Island to reinstate investment in out of school time learning for over 5 years.
- I'm a product of quality Afterschool and Summer programs and contribute to RI's economy and I'm a parent of 2 beautiful children who NEED programs in Westerly.

We need this to pass this bill because.

- It's important to fund programs that aren't eligible for other funding streams to get the 59,000 youth on waiting lists the service they need and deserve.
- Rhode Island needs this to sustain our economy and keep talented youth in our state.
- Other states are way ahead of RI on investing in out of school time learning cross multiple entities within these state structures. They fund their department of ed's, the private sector, and governor initiatives all centering around afterschool and summer programs. Why not Rhode Island? Let's join in this effort that has lasting positive impact and results.

Currently, 59,000 local youth are without out-school time program opportunities. It is critical that we invest in Out-of-School-Time so that every student has access to comprehensive and effective programming during the afterschool and summer learning.

I really hope you consider how important this is to me. We are depending on you to make the right decision.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Ayana Melvan
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Westerly, RI