

Thursday, April 9

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Peter Chung! I'm a parent of a 3rd grader at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Elementary School and a resident of Providence. I am writing in support of House Bill No.8047 RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

I'd like to lead off by stating that THE BOOST BILL IS ESSENTIAL FOR RHODE ISLAND FAMILIES!

As a parent juggling the demands of personal and professional life, I cannot emphasize the importance of afterschool and out-of-school time programs in my child's life. We are grateful for programs like the Mount Hope Community Learning Center and the work they do in running before and after-school programs at my child's school. Their dedication and commitment have been a lifeline for my family and countless others who face the challenge of balancing work schedules with school hours especially when our school day starts at 9:15 AM and ends at 3:50PM. Because of critical afterschool serving organizations like them, we have access to a program that not only supports our family's logistical needs but also enriches our children's lives in profound ways.

When I talk with my child about his afterschool experiences, three things consistently stand out. Firstly, he loves the opportunity to hang out with his friends from different grades in his school. These friendships forged in his afterschool programs are invaluable, fostering a sense of camaraderie and belonging that extends beyond the classroom.

Secondly, he emphasizes that afterschool programs don't feel like an extension of the school day. Instead, they offer a change of pace, allowing him to pursue his many interests and engage in hands-on activities. Also he uses it mainly as an excuse to say that he didn't do his homework because afterschool is not all about homework help!

And finally, perhaps most importantly, my child simply states, "it's fun." Afterschool programs provide a dynamic and stimulating environment where he and his friends can unleash their creativity, curiosity, and energy. Whether it's through sports, arts and crafts, STEM activities, or simply free play, he enjoys the diverse range of experiences that captivate him and his friends.

It's not just my family that benefits from afterschool programs; it's an overwhelming sentiment echoed by the community. In fact, a staggering 89% of Rhode Island parents support public funding for out-of-school time programming, underscoring the widespread recognition of its importance.

We are grateful to be able to afford and access a variety of after-school and out-of-school-time programs for our child, however, more than 59000+ Rhode Island students still need access to these programs.

I say all this to say after-school and out-of-school time are not merely a convenience for working families like mine. It is a vital support system that enriches our children's lives. The BOOST Bill is an investment for all Rhode Island children and families!

Sincerely,
Peter Chung