



**Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education
Organizational Testimony in Opposition to House Bill #HB7402
Apr 23, 2024**

The Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education Justice (ARISE) stands in opposition to House Bill 7402, which seeks to exempt schools or school districts under intervention for failing statuses from the withholding of state aid for nonpayment of tuition debts. This bill's passage would set a dangerous precedent, allowing schools to avoid financial accountability, which is critical to the integrity and functioning of our educational institutions.

This bill also proposes to apply these exemptions retroactively to January 1, 2021, complicating and potentially nullifying ongoing financial reconciliations crucial for the equitable distribution of educational resources. Such a measure not only disrupts the financial management of school districts but also undermines efforts to ensure that all schools fulfill their obligations to their communities and students.

Furthermore, withholding state aid has historically been a necessary measure to enforce compliance with educational laws and regulations. Removing such mechanisms, especially without stringent alternative accountability measures, risks enabling a culture of noncompliance that could further harm students in already struggling districts.

We urge the committee to consider the broader implications of HB 7402 on the educational landscape of Rhode Island. By allowing schools to circumvent financial responsibilities, we risk the integrity of our educational funding system and the welfare of our students, particularly those in the Providence Public School System who have already suffered from decades of neglect.

We respectfully request that this bill be opposed to ensure that all schools remain accountable for their financial and educational commitments to their students and communities.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.