



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5389 – AN ACT RELATING EDUCATION -- THE PAUL W. CROWLEY RHODE ISLAND STUDENT INVESTMENT INITIATIVE.

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, I write in support of House Bill 5389, which seeks to remove the authority of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to withhold funds from a debtor community through the General Treasurer. Additionally, the bill limits increases in contributions by a school or school district to no more than twenty percent (20%) of the legislative increase in any levy by the respective city or town and requires the appointment of an auditor by the General Assembly to review and report on expenditures performed by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) in cases of district intervention.

The League of Cities and Towns supports measures that reinforce municipal fiscal responsibility while ensuring transparency and accountability in state interventions. House Bill 5389 appropriately restores local control by preventing unilateral state action that could destabilize municipal budgets. By limiting the financial burden on cities and towns, this legislation ensures that local governments can continue providing essential services while still supporting their public schools in a fiscally responsible manner.

Furthermore, the provision requiring an independent audit of expenditures for school districts under intervention introduces oversight. Transparency in financial management is a fundamental principle of good governance, and this measure will help ensure that state resources are being used effectively and in the best interest of students, educators, and taxpayers.

For these reasons, the League urges the Committee to support House Bill 5389 and advance it favorably.

Thank you for your consideration, and we appreciate your commitment to policies that empower Rhode Island's municipalities.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Finance Committee