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Support for H7303

Superintendent Don E. Cowart II
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Dear Representative Noret,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 7303 currently under consideration in the RI General Assembly. As the Superintendent in Coventry and a lifelong educator, I strongly believe that this proposed legislation is a crucial step forward in addressing the threats and hostility that school personnel handle when dealing with the general public in their capacity as municipal employees.

I recently made a controversial proposal to the school committee that would help address long-standing budget issues and improve the learning environment for our students. We had many long tense meetings that included public comment that I would characterize as inappropriate and borderline harassment at times. In addition, there were numerous social media posts attacking me and my staff for the proposal. I was forced to deactivate my personal social media account to avoid the negativity directed towards me. There were fake accounts created in my name and numerous attempts to hack into my existing accounts. I would not describe my experience as threatening, but the hostility was very uncomfortable and left me and my family concerned about retribution.

H7303 demonstrates a commitment to supporting school employees who are often the face of the community and interact more frequently and intimately with the general public than some elected public officials. The potential to bring about positive change in our state and community will provide peace of mind to many educators.

Furthermore, I commend the effort of your sponsorship of this Bill and for your dedication to advancing this important initiative. Your leadership and advocacy reflect a genuine concern for the well-being of our school communities and a commitment to making RI a better place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Don E. Cowart II

“Working Together To Improve Our Schools”

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