

Good afternoon Judiciary Committee,

My name is Brissia Rodriguez Reyes, I am a senior at Classical High School as well as part of the board of directors at Young Voices, an afterschool program in Providence, RI. I am here today to testify against Bill H5262. This bill would add school superintendents, central office officials, school principals, and all other school employees to the detention of a “public official” for purposes of the criminal prohibition against making threats to public officials.

This bill significantly harms me and my companions because of the vague language that is used on the bill. For example, a teacher could interpret a threat as a student making a harmless joke about them or their family as a threat. It could also be used as a way to target students that the teachers don't like, especially students of color who are statistically known to be seen as a “threat” or a “problem child.” I have seen my classmates sent to detention or to the office because they were speaking back to the teacher when they felt as though they were being treated unfairly or when they themselves felt threatened by their teachers. Now imagine yourself in that situation or maybe in one where you're no longer allowed to speak up on something that you find is unfair or else you'll be imprisoned for 5 years or be fined \$5,000.

I am urging you to please withdraw your support on this bill because it punishes the student in the student and teacher relationship and leaves the teacher without repercussion. Furthermore, teachers in a judiciary standpoint are the priority while students are left behind to fend for themselves, this relationship is unethical and unjust. From personal experience there have always been laws or bills protecting the safety of teachers, like some places are thinking of giving teachers guns to protect students, but what if that teacher doesn't like a student and uses that gun for evil? That's why movements such as counselors, not cops, are so huge. It focuses on the genuine well-being of students at the end of the day.

Please consider this, and vote no on H5262.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,

Brissia Rodriguez Reyes