

Roberta DiMezza

From: Rep. Craven, Robert E.
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 4:02 PM
To: Office - Robert Craven & Associates
Cc: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: FW: Oppose H5262: Protect Students from Harmful Criminalization

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: Harrison Tuttle <harrisonuttule@blmripac.com>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 11:32 AM
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Subject: Oppose H5262: Protect Students from Harmful Criminalization

Dear Members of the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee,

We write to you today in opposition to [House Bill 5262](#). The bill, opposed by over ten organizations, would increase criminal penalties for anyone, including children, who makes a direct or indirect threat to any school employee.

This proposal does not increase resources for teachers and school staff, which are desperately needed, and only exacerbates the harm to children and families through further criminalization. While we do not want to dismiss school employees' fear of violence or threats, we want to share research from Psychology Today and the American Psychological Association. Christopher J. Ferguson, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Stetson University and a member of President Biden's task force, has shared research titled "What to Do About School Threats: Balancing the Law and Mental Health for School Threats Among Youth." This research affects educators, school personnel, and students in Pre-K through 12th grades and documents the negative impacts of further criminalization and mass incarceration of students. You can review these studies following [this link](#).

(Christopher J. Ferguson, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at Stetson University. He is interested in media violence and, in particular, video games. He has been invited to speak at Vice President Biden's task force and a 2013 Institute of Medicine/CDC panel on the subject. In summer 2018, he testified at the School Safety Commission.)

We also want to share the work of advancing partnerships around children's mental health led by The APA Presidential Task Force to "Reduce Police Violence Against African Americans." This task force is working on guidelines for police organizations, with input from community organizations, police department leaders, and other partnerships to address children's mental health. You can find more information at [this link](#).

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