



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
ONE UNION STATION  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903  
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

**Testimony Re: House Bill 5547 Re: Council on Elementary and Secondary Education**

**House Education Committee**

**March 15, 2023**

**Paige Clausius-Parks, Executive Director**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support for House Bill 5547 and thank Representative Morales for sponsoring and Representatives Casimiro, Kislak, Potter, Giraldo, Stewart, McNamara, Lombardi, Henries, and Caldwell for cosponsoring. This bill would provide the chairperson of the Student Advisory Council with voting powers on the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and exempts a student, if under 18 years of age, from the Senate advise and consent process.

The *Rhode Island Board of Education Act* establishes the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education that consists of eight voting members of the Board of Education, all appointed by the Governor. It also establishes a Student Advisory Council consisting of one elected high school student representative from each public secondary school in grades 9, 10, and 11. The members of the Student Advisory Council are selected through an election at each public high school in Rhode Island. A student may serve no more than three terms on the Student Advisory Council. The members of the Student Advisory Council elect a chairperson from within the Student Advisory Council to serve a one-year term as an ex officio and nonvoting member of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

The 2022-2023 Student Advisory Council is made up of 43 members representing 40 school districts (Barrington, Bristol Warren, Burrillville, Central Falls, Chariho, Coventry, Cranston, Cumberland, East Greenwich, East Providence, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, Middletown, Narragansett, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Tiverton, Warwick, West Warwick, Westerly, Woonsocket, Davies, the MET School, Rhode Island School for the Deaf, Achievement First High School, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep, Charette High School, Highlander Charter School, NEL/CPS Construction and Career Academy, Paul Cuffee School, Rhode Island Nurses Institute, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and Village Green Virtual Charter School).

[rikids@rikidscount.org](mailto:rikids@rikidscount.org)  
[www.rikidscount.org](http://www.rikidscount.org)

Nationally, 28 states have high school students on their state board of education. Of these 28 states, four (California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Vermont) have students as voting members of their board.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports efforts to amplify youth voice and to provide opportunities for youth to make policy decisions that impact their lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

