



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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Testimony Re: Budget Article 5, Question 3(a) Regarding Affordable Housing Bond

House Finance Committee

March 12, 2020

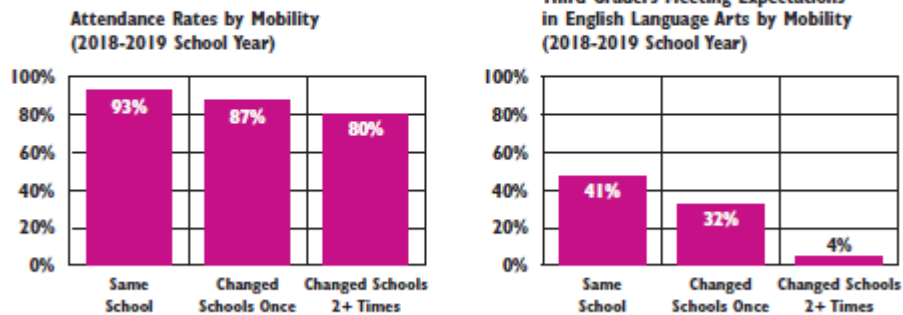
Stephanie Geller, Deputy Director

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT strongly supports **Article 5, Question 3 (a)** which recommends that an \$87.5 million housing and infrastructure bond, including \$25.0 million in new funding for affordable housing, be submitted to voters on the November 2020 ballot.

Rhode Island has an urgent housing shortage. The supply of housing is not keeping up with demand, and the cost of housing is outpacing wages. Poor quality, unaffordable, and crowded housing has a negative effect on children’s physical health, development, and emotional well-being and on a family’s ability to meet their children’s basic needs. Children who live in families with housing cost burdens often live in low-quality and overcrowded housing and move frequently, all of which have been linked to increased absenteeism, lower educational achievement, and increased risk of homelessness.



School Mobility and Education Outcomes in Rhode Island



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2018-2019 school year.

The support of the Rhode Island General Assembly has been invaluable to the ballot initiatives that have enabled the continued housing production under the Building Homes RI program. We ask for your support for this important investment in our state’s housing which will help our economy and our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

