



Public Testimony
Senate Education Committee
Re: Senate Bill 2168
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Submitted by The Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty

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Good afternoon. My name is Emily Jones and I'm speaking on behalf of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, a coalition of diverse religious communities and advocacy partners throughout the state who have come together to fight poverty.

I am testifying today to voice our organization's strong support for Senate Bill 2168.

Without reiterating all that you have heard or will hear from other advocates, both this year and last year, allow me to highlight, briefly, a few points:

- Children learn best when they are in the classroom. We now know that out-of-school suspensions cause long-term harm, increasing the risk of drop-out and feeding the school-to-prison pipeline.
- We also know that out-of-school suspensions disproportionately impact African-American and Latino/a students.
- Additionally, out-of-school suspensions have an outsized impact on students with disabilities.
- Suspensions should be used far more sparingly as we seek to keep all our children in the classroom and learning each and every school day. Further, the use of discipline in our schools should be carefully monitored for disproportionate impact. Action should be taken to address and correct for those disparities if they are found.
- The bill before you today, Senate Bill 2168, is a necessary step forward. We strongly urge your continued support on this important issue.

Thank you for your public service.