

HAPPY
MOTHER'S DAY



Happy Mother's Day Weekend!

The Special Education Ombudsman bill testimonies will be heard by the House Finance Committee at 4:30pm on May 10th at the Rhode Island Statehouse.

We need EVERYONE to testify to get this bill passed.

We are SO close, but this is the make it or break it day!

We need lots of families to attend to testify – the alternative is keeping everything as is and losing our kids – graduating high school not prepared for the real world, barely reading/writing and school districts will continue to do what they want.

We need this Ombudsman to make EVERYONE accountable for identification, development, and delivery

of IEPs and 504s if the child needs them.

Can we count on you – are you a bystander or a change maker?

If you cannot make it to the Statehouse, please send your testimony to buono@thearc.org and we will make sure the testimonies get in the hands of our legislators.



Fact Sheet: H-7536 Creating the Ombudsman Office of Special Education

Sponsored by: Rep. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport), Cortvriend and Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown), Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket), Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth), Fenton-Fung (R-Dist. 15, Cranston), Shallcross Smith (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket), Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence), Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick), and Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown)

Advocating for students and their families in Special Education

Why do we need a Special Education Ombudsman?

Students with disabilities need access to individualized, student-centered education services in order to attain their academic goals. Parents and families of students with disabilities face innumerable barriers in virtually every aspect of their lives. These families are often expected to teach themselves a complex area of law, advocate for the student's rights, and hold schools accountable if they fail to adequately serve the student. Navigating the special education system can seem like an overwhelming or impossible task for students and families. The Special Education Ombudsman provides critical advocacy and support to students and families seeking special education services.

What is the Special Education Ombud?

The Special Education Ombud protects the educational rights of students and the parental rights through individual and systemic advocacy. The office works with local and state agencies to ensure quality Special Education services are provided statewide. The Ombud may also access educational records, with appropriate consent; analyze law, rules, and policies, monitor implementation, and recommend changes. Recollect and report on any education concerns on Special Education to the Governor and Legislators.

Who benefits?

Not only will students with disabilities and their families benefit from the Ombud's advocacy, schools and governmental bodies will also benefit from the Ombud's expertise and recommendations to improve systemic inequities for all children in education. **When students with disabilities are provided with adequate educational services, their educational outcomes significantly improve; reducing dependence on social services, stemming the flow of students into the school to jail pipeline, and preparing more students to enter the workforce and lead healthy, productive lives. The Ombud will ultimately reduce the costs to the state and contribute to a stronger Rhode Island economy.**

SPEAR - The Arc Rhode Island
1130 Ten Rod Rd, Suite E-205, North Kingstown, RI, 02852
401-363-9899
Scocchi@thearc.org
<https://ri.thearc.org/>



RI BILL H-7536 & S-2375 OMBUD BILL

SIGN OUR PETITION ON CHANGE.ORG

Sincerely,
Joanna Scocchi, State Director

The Arc Rhode Island & Rhode Island Advocacy for Children

ri.thearc.org

401-363-9899
