

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FODARTY, MEMBER OF CONGRESS
FROM THE SECOND DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND, BEFORE THE COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION AND LABOR OF THE U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
IN SUPPORT OF HIS BILL, H.R. 96, THE SCHOOL SUPPORT ACT OF 1959.

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Education and Labor Committee.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you to support the proposed legislation which you are presently considering and to urge federal action in the field of education. My own bill on the subject, H.R. 96, which is a companion measure to others you have before you, would have the federal government recognize its rightful responsibility. I cannot too strongly request this Committee to take the earliest possible action to remedy a situation which is fast growing to catastrophic proportions.

The need for increased financial support for education is indicated by the fact that we are now educating about 10 million more children in the public schools of the United States than we were prior to World War II. There will be another eight million students in these schools by 1964-65 according to enrollment projections of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

In the small state of Rhode Island alone over 5,000 additional children enter the public schools every September. The Rhode Island State

Department of Education estimates that from 1950 to 1960 the membership in Rhode Island schools will have increased by more than 10%. All of this tremendous influx of children is of course due to the great increase in the birth rate in the past war years. In fact the average number of births in Rhode Island during the last 10 years is almost 75% greater than the 1930-40 average. This means that Rhode Island like all other states is faced with the job of providing new school facilities for the children who are entering our schools now as well as those who will enter in the future.

The Rhode Island State Department of Education estimates that Rhode Island needs a minimum of at least 100 additional classrooms every year to meet the need of increased enrollments and nearer 200 additional classrooms if old and antiquated rooms are to be replaced. The lack of school building activity during the depression and war years left Rhode Island with a 20 year backlog in school building. The Rhode Island State Department of Education has this to say about the school building situation in Rhode Island, "Rhode Island communities have been making an heroic effort to meet the school housing needs along but they are losing the race to the shrinking dollar and the stark." The financial burden placed on some cities and towns in

Rhode Island due to the school housing shortage has put their financial status in jeopardy. These communities are desperately in need of some financial relief.

Increased enrollments create a need for more classrooms. More classrooms create a need for more teachers. Rhode Island needs over 500 new teachers every year yet we have been able to train only half that number. The problem is complicated by the fact that today's college graduates were born during the depression, a period of low birth rates so that the number of students graduating from College in all fields is comparatively small. Thus the competition for the small available supply of teachers is very keen and Rhode Island is having its troubles staffing its schools. In fact in the Fall of 1958 Rhode Island had to call on 307 teachers with emergency certificates to help it staff its classrooms.

It is evident from the data presented above that Rhode Island is faced with a serious shortage of classroom facilities and a need for more teachers. This is true despite the fact that the State has almost tripled its aid to local communities since 1952. Local communities depending almost exclusively

on property taxes are hard put to find where the next dollar is coming from to finance their school needs. A state fiscal commission is now making a study of the present tax structure of the state and will shortly make recommendations to the governor and the general assembly. The state and local communities will continue to pay the major share of school costs. The need for new school facilities and higher teacher salaries however could very well place such a heavy tax burden on the state that it would find itself at a competitive disadvantage with other states.

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H. R. ~~56~~ would assist Rhode Island and other states by providing a measure of federal support which would go a long way toward relieving part of the tremendous tax burden caused by the continuous rise in school costs.

Last year for the first time in our history the congress of the United States passed a piece of legislation the title of which declared education to be an important part of the nation's defense. The successful bill was a companion measure to one I had introduced early in the Congress. In 1957 the United States expended $\frac{1}{4}$ billion dollars on national defense; yet its contribution to the support of education was less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of total education

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expenditures. H.R. 75 calls for a federal appropriation of 1.1 billion dollars in 1959 rising to 4.7 billion in 1962. Surely the federal government can afford this kind of support to the states to assist them in the work of educating our human resources who play such an important role in helping keep American strong and free. The job cannot and should not be done alone at the local and state level.

I hope that the members of this Committee agree with me and that they will take early action to favorably report a bill which will permit the federal government to accept its full share of the responsibility for the schooling of our Nation's youth.