



The Providence Student Union

775 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

June 12, 2020

The Hon. Gina Raimondo
Governor
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: PSU respectfully declines invitation for assembly

Dear Governor Raimondo,

On behalf of the Providence Student Union and our 3 high school Youth chapters in the Providence Public School District (PPSD), we respectfully decline your request for assembly.

For a decade, the Providence Student Union has fought for the betterment of Youth's education and well-being in our city. PSU has always been clear on creating initiatives to dismantle racism, white supremacy and punitive disciplinary practices in schools. As early as 2018, PSU embarked on campaigns such as "[Counselors Not Cops](#)" which calls to defund the Providence Police Department's contract with PPSD, remove all SRO's in all schools across the state and allocate those funds towards hiring more mental health professionals. PSU has fought for the incorporation of [Ethnic Studies classes](#) across curriculums to ensure culturally relevant coursework for students of color which make up 90% of PPSD's student population. We have advocated and testified in front of many city and state officials to [fix our schools](#) and pleaded to repair crumbling buildings, shed light onto unsafe health conditions, and advocated for a greater investment in school infrastructure. PSU has gone as far as creating a [Student Bill of Rights](#) that lays out in 22 articles what Youth believe what an adequate education means to them.

If we were to meet today, our Youth would have highlighted all of these campaigns yet again to you and other members of your staff who have lacked initiative to fix these very present problems. Your office did not need to wait for examples of police brutality and national protests to act and bring us together. Our Youth are mentally, physically and emotionally exhausted to yet again have another "open space conversation" with a promise of change. This is more difficult as we see the announcement of the closing of Evolution High School and the

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reopening of schools on August 31 without community or Youth input. How would you guarantee the health and safety of our students, teachers and their families?

It is because of the reasons mentioned above that we respectfully decline your invitation to assemble with you and your staff. We hope you understand our frustrations and see that we have been advocating for these efforts long before you were in office. We hope that you consider taking a second look at our work.

In Power and Resistance,

The Providence Student Union