

Chris O'Brien

From: Karen Bellnier <kbmusings@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 10:44 AM
To: Chris O'Brien
Subject: In Support of RI Promise

Dear Committee,

I am writing in support of the Rhode Island Promise program and ask that you make it permanent, providing future high school graduates the opportunity to earn a college degree at CCRI.

As the Director of Instructional Technology and Online Learning at CCRI, I have seen firsthand the positive impact the program has on students, many of whom never would have even applied to college assuming it was too expensive. Expanding our online and digital options combined with your financial support makes getting a certificate or degree from CCRI possible for everyone graduating this year and in the future.

Our Promise students work hard and are grateful for the opportunity they have received through the program. There is no doubt in my mind that these students are our future leaders, CEOs, teachers, nurses, and community leaders.

It has also transformed the college. Colleges and universities across the country, but especially here in the Northeast, has seen declining enrollment for the past several years, resulting in faculty and staff layoffs and even school closures. Here, Promise has stabilized our enrollment, but CCRI would be devastated if the program ended. Promise changes the conversation from "should" I go to college to "how can" college help me achieve my goals.

And now, facing the worst public health and economic crisis this country has ever faced, this program is more critical than ever before. With all the uncertainty in our world, families deserve to have the security of knowing that their children can obtain a college degree through the Promise program. When we come out of this crisis, we need our young people to be educated and trained for the jobs that will be waiting for them. Promise is the best path to get them there.

Thank you for time and consideration, and I respectfully ask you lift the sunset and make Promise permanent.

Sincerely,

Karen Bellnier

Charlestown, RI

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