

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Halima Ibrahim <halimaibrahim1010@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:41 AM  
**To:** Chris O'Brien  
**Subject:** In regards to the Rhode Island Promise Program

Dear Committee,

Throughout my middle school years, I struggled with many chronic illnesses that rendered me fully disabled by my freshman year of high school in 2016. Because of my high school's inability to fully support me academically while I was fully bedridden, I withdrew. The next year, I returned to a new high school, starting ninth grade over again. However, like the year before, a sudden decline in health forced me to withdraw. Although this time, I dropped out for good. I was left as a chronically ill fifteen-year-old with a desire for education, but an inability to complete it.

Two months before my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, I received my GED after over a year of teaching myself whatever I could. Only a few days after, I started my first semester of college at CCRI under the RI Promise. The Rhode Island Promise Scholarship was a blessing my family didn't ask for, but desperately needed. My medical treatment, along with my mother's, is enough to make a quality education unaffordable without setting myself up for crippling debt. I am unable to work, therefore unable to pay for my education completely, but because of Rhode Island Promise, I'm able to receive the education I've wanted without having to worry about my family's financial situation at all.

In the fall, I will be started my sophomore year—my second and final year at CCRI. Through my time there, I have found a love for Art History and plan to work towards a career as a museum curator, critic, and professor. I started last year as a disabled high school dropout, but I write to you now as an honors student and a representative of the student government with a 3.97 GPA. I now work towards transferring to Harvard, Brown, or Cornell University, with the plan to pursue a Ph.D. immediately upon receiving my bachelor's degree.

I am writing to ask you to support making Rhode Island Promise permanent. Without the existence of this incredible program, I would never have been given the opportunity to pursue any type of education passed a high school level. Without the existence of this program, hundreds of other struggling students will not be given the support they need in order to create a bright future for themselves. CCRI isn't just a community college, it's a chance at a successful future. You have the power to decide to continue to grant that success or leave students the inability to find valid careers, build stable incomes, and in extreme cases, to find a home. This decision determines the future of the next group of high school graduates and what kind of society we are setting up for our state and our country.

The Rhode Island Promise Scholarship is the reason for all my academic achievements. It is the reason I am no longer just a high school dropout. It is the reason I am set on the path to a bright, successful, and prosperous future; one where my illness and economic status do not get in the way of. I am thankful for its existence every day and pray it can continue to provide valuable opportunities to other students like me, who were never given proper support before. By allowing the program to continue permanently, you are only helping a new group of citizens reach their full potential and therefore, benefit our state as a whole.

Sincerely,  
Halima Ibrahim  
2020 Rhode Island Youth Poetry Ambassador  
Phi Theta Kappa member  
CCRI Class of 2021