

**Subject:** Support for S-2208 / H-7271 – Strengthening UCAP for the Future

Dear Chairperson and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is **Diana Garlington**, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of **S-2208 / H-7271, Strengthening UCAP for the Future**.

UCAP was founded in 1989, long before alternative education models were widely available in Rhode Island. For more than 37 years, UCAP has served students who need a different pathway to success—students who benefit from accelerated learning opportunities and a smaller, more structured educational environment. For many young people, UCAP provides not only academic support but also stability, mentorship, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Through my work in community advocacy and youth development in Providence, I have seen firsthand how important it is to have educational options that meet students where they are. Many young people face barriers that traditional school environments are not always designed to address. Programs like UCAP help keep students engaged in learning, connected to opportunity, and on a path toward graduation and career success.

**S-2208 / H-7271 strengthens UCAP’s long-term sustainability** by allowing additional school districts to refer students and by clarifying governance and admissions authority. These updates reflect the reality of today’s educational landscape and ensure that UCAP can continue to serve students effectively and responsibly.

At a time when many communities are working to keep young people connected to education and out of systems that can derail their futures, it is critical that Rhode Island supports programs that provide flexible and supportive learning environments. UCAP has proven its value for decades, and this legislation will help ensure that it remains a stable and accountable public option for families across our state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support **S-2208 / H-7271**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Diana Garlington**  
Providence, Rhode Island