



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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Dunican, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN), the statewide intermediary supporting out-of-school time and expanded learning opportunities across Rhode Island.

I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill S-2208 and House Bill H-7271, which are critical to sustaining the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) and the students it serves.

For more than three decades, UCAP has provided an essential pathway for young people who have not found success in traditional school settings, offering smaller learning environments, individualized support, and a focus on both academic progress and social-emotional development. These are the very conditions that research shows are necessary to re-engage students and support long-term success.

At a time when Rhode Island continues to face high levels of chronic absenteeism and unmet demand for expanded learning opportunities, programs like UCAP are not optional; they are essential. Across the state, we see that students thrive when they have access to personalized, relationship-driven learning environments that extend beyond the traditional school day.

This legislation represents an important step forward in modernizing UCAP's governance and ensuring that access is based on student need rather than district participation alone. By allowing additional districts to refer students, S-2208 and H-7271 strengthen both equity and sustainability, ensuring that more young people can benefit from this proven model.

From a statewide perspective, sustaining programs like UCAP is aligned with Rhode Island's broader goals of improving student engagement, advancing equity, and building a stronger, more responsive education system that includes both in-school and out-of-school time pathways.

I respectfully urge your support for this important legislation and for the students and families who depend on UCAP as a critical part of their educational journey.

Sincerely,

*Michael Dunican*

Michael Dunican  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Afterschool Network