

**Richard G. Horan**

March 11, 2026

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Richard Horan, and I am a long-time supporter of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP). I write in support of the proposed legislation cited above.

I have been very close to the UCAP story since its founding in 1989, based upon a lifelong and close personal friendship with UCAP's founder, Rob DeBlois. I watched from close range as Rob launched UCAP, long before alternative education models were widely available in Rhode Island. I was particularly impressed with Rob's willingness to target one of the most challenging unmet needs in the education field, i.e. middle school students at risk of dropping out. I watched with great admiration as Rob marshalled the support among collaborating communities to build support for the UCAP model. Equally impressive was the initiative Rob took to engage the private sector, commencing with the effort in 1995 to become the first public school in RI to undertake a \$1 million capital campaign, ultimately purchasing and renovating a permanent home at 75 Carpenter St. in Providence. Later in time, the effort expanded when UCAP launched a \$3.5 million capital campaign to acquire adjoining buildings, thereby transforming the UCAP School to become a leading model for alternative education, both in Rhode Island but also on the national stage. The continued engagement of the private sector in what has evolved to become a testimony to the possibilities of public/private partnerships and the value proposition they represent in Rhode Island's educational sector have proven to be an enduring contribution to the communities being served.

I also watched from close range as Rob positioned himself for the inevitable succession that would be required as he retired from his founding role. In this connection, I was particularly pleased to see the appointment of Lynn Prentiss as Executive Director in 2021. I have known Lynn since before her enrollment at the University of Rhode Island, when she worked as Rob's special assistant. In that role, Lynn developed a fundamental understanding and appreciation of Rob's founding vision for UCAP. I followed with interest her college career at URI and later her pursuit of a Masters in Education at Johnson & Wales. I was thrilled to learn of her appointment at UCAP, quite confident that the organization could not have found a leader more capable of fulfilling Rob's founding vision. Suffice it to say, there is not a leader better-suited to serve as steward to the State of Rhode Island's continued support for UCAP.

Given the success story that UCAP has represented since its founding, and given the exceptional leadership in place going forward, I believe continued support of UCAP represents as compelling an opportunity for continued support as one might imagine in our state's educational sector. I urge you and colleagues to consider carefully the importance of maintaining support.

Sincerely,



Richard G. Horan

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