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Hon. Marvin L. Abney  
Chair  
Finance Committee  
RI House of Representatives  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Abney,

I want to offer my personal thanks to you for the outstanding job that you do representing your district and chairing the House Finance Committee. I know that you put in many long hours, are diligent in assessing the State's needs, and in presenting a budget that is fair-minded and comprehensive. I believe that the entire State of Rhode Island should be grateful for your efforts and for that of your colleagues on the Committee as well as members of the House Fiscal Staff.

I am writing today in very strong support of the proposed bond to build a State Archives Facility.

There is no question that the State of Rhode Island possesses many very important historical documents and that it is equally important these documents be stored in an appropriate atmosphere that will preserve and protect their integrity for generations to come. It is also important that such documents be available in a central facility for purposes of research, student visits, and tour visits. It provides an opportunity to show the significant role that Rhode Island has played in the formation and growth of our country.

As you know, I was instrumental in the recent establishment of the Black Regiment Monument Commission. The BRMC seeks to promulgate the valor of the members of The Black Regiment in the American Revolutionary War. BRMC assisted Hon. Jo Eva Gaines in donating material from the files of her late husband, Hon. Paul L. Gaines, to the State Archives. Such materials reflect not only on the deeds of The Black Regiment, but also on those people who have striven to see that history marks these achievements.

Doubtless, there are other stories about other families and individuals donating materials and artifacts that are reflective of Rhode Island's unique history and culture that merit a special place to be seen - to be showcased. I want to add that I believe that there are many people like me who are extremely interested in learning more about the history of Rhode Island from the significant to the quirky.

I want to urge you and your colleagues on the House Finance Committee to be receptive to a proposal from Sec. of State Gregg Amore on the establishment of a State Archives Facility. As you well know, Sec. Amore has been a true leader in seeing that Rhode Islanders become more civic- and history-minded. His professional experience as a history teacher and his role as a State Representative make him especially knowledgeable about the importance of preserving history. I admire his special focus on engaging youth. We all talk about getting this group more involved- he is actually doing it.

While there is no doubt that this project would add to the State's bonded indebtedness, I believe that we genuinely need this facility. It will serve to demonstrate the pride we have in our state while doing the responsible thing of maintaining our important documents in a proper and orderly manner as a service to our country. It would stand as destination site that would be enjoyed and appreciated by many, many people.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

All good wishes,

J. Clement Cicilline, M.S.