



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT AFL-CIO

To: House Finance Committee
From: Frank Flynn, RIFTHP, President
Date: February 27, 2024
Re: **Testimony in Support of H 7225 – Article 5, State Archives**

On behalf of the 12,000 members of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professional, the largest labor union in the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, I am writing in support of Article 5 of the Governor’s budget which would place Bond Question 2 on the ballot in November and allow Rhode Island to build a much-needed State Archive and Museum.

We appreciate Secretary of State Gregg Amore ‘s leadership on this initiative and also the fact that Governor McKee has included it in the FY 2025 Budget Proposal. A state owned and operated building to house Rhode Island’s most valued treasures is long overdue.

As one of the thirteen original colonies dating back nearly four hundred years and one of thirteen original United States of America, we have a long, distinguished place in the history of our nation. Preserving the numerous unique, priceless, irreplaceable documents and artifacts should be a state priority. For too long these items have been housed in inadequate, insufficient, inaccessible locations. It is time to follow the example of virtually every other State and have a dedicated building not only to house these treasures but a venue to preserve and display them for our citizenry to view and appreciate our rich history.

Creating a building with the dual purpose of preserving these items, but also creating the capacity to display these artifacts, will allow thousands of Rhode Island’s students and citizens to have a place to learn and appreciate our rich history. It will also create an attraction to bring tourists from throughout our country and the world to visit our great state and bring an added economic benefit.

As we approach the semi quincentennial of our nation’s founding it is fitting that we, as a state, pass this bond to preserve the past for all future Rhode Islanders. We urge you to support Article 5 and begin the process of creating a State Archive that we can all be proud of.

Thank you for your consideration.

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