



COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OF RHODE ISLAND

**Office of the President**

May 1, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chairman, House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H6139, An Act Relating to Education – Rhode Island Promise Scholarship

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today in strong support of House Bill 6139, which makes enhancements to the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship. On behalf of the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and the students we serve, I commend Representative Azzinaro and the co-sponsors of this legislation for their leadership in championing this important bill, which aligns with our shared goals of broadening access to higher education and preparing Rhode Islanders for the workforce.

Since its inception, the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship has been a transformative initiative for our state, making higher education accessible and affordable for thousands of students. In its current form, Rhode Island Promise does not include students pursuing credit-bearing certificate programs, even as these credentials are increasingly in demand across our economy. CCRI has introduced a growing number of workforce-ready, credit-bearing certificates - including in high-need fields such as cybersecurity, surgical technology, and court reporting - specifically designed to respond to employer needs and help students quickly earn credentials that lead to gainful employment.

H6139 takes an important step toward equity by extending Promise eligibility to students pursuing these rigorous and career-relevant pathways. Credit-bearing certificate programs, many of which are stackable and serve as entry points to associate degrees, are vital to meeting Rhode Island's workforce and economic development goals.

We estimate that the annual cost to expand Promise eligibility to credit-bearing certificate-seeking students would be approximately \$82,500, a modest investment that would yield significant returns for Rhode Island's workforce and the lives of the students we serve.

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H6139 also makes a thoughtful and student-centered improvement by extending Promise eligibility in certain circumstances. The current requirement that students enroll full-time at CCRI in the fall immediately after high school graduation does not reflect the complex realities many students face. Life events such as family emergencies, medical issues, or financial instability can delay a student's ability to begin college on a traditional timeline.

Allowing for a limited, one-semester extension of eligibility - with an approved request - acknowledges that the path to a degree or credential is not always linear and provides students with the flexibility they may need to succeed. Similarly, permitting students who begin their postsecondary journey at another institution in the fall to access Promise if they enroll at CCRI in the spring ensures we are not penalizing students who need to adjust their plans early on.

We estimate that the annual cost to extend Promise eligibility in these targeted ways would be approximately \$62,500.

At CCRI, we believe that all students deserve the opportunity to access affordable, high-quality education. H6139 reflects that belief and represents meaningful improvements to the Rhode Island Promise program. Importantly, both of these enhancements can be accommodated within the Governor's recommended FY26 Rhode Island Promise Scholarship appropriation of \$8.3 million, without the need for additional funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary A. Costigan".

Rosemary A. Costigan, Ph.D., RN

Interim President

Community College of Rhode Island