

Uptown Entertainment
270 Broadway
Providence, RI 02903



May 22, 2025

Representative Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI

Re: Opposition to House Bill H 6334

Dear Chairman Abney,

I am writing on behalf of Uptown Theater to express our strong opposition to House Bill H 6334, which proposes a tax on ticket sales for venues with seating capacities exceeding 800. As the new owners of the historic Uptown Theater in Providence—formerly known as the Columbus Theatre—we are deeply concerned about the detrimental effects this bill would have on our business, our audience, and the broader local economy.

We recently acquired the Uptown Theater and have made significant financial and personal investments in its restoration. This includes extensive renovations to modernize the venue while preserving its historic charm. Our vision is to reopen as a thriving hub for live music, comedy, film, and community programming. However, the proposed tax presents a serious obstacle to that vision.

In today's competitive entertainment market, where artists and promoters weigh every financial detail, an added tax on ticket sales places Rhode Island venues at a clear disadvantage compared to those in neighboring states like Massachusetts and Connecticut—none of which impose a similar tax. For a newly reopened independent venue like the Uptown, this would be devastating to our ability to attract national tours and performers, who often have multiple options when routing their shows.

This bill risks more than just lost shows. A decline in performances at venues like ours directly impacts local restaurants, bars, hotels, and small businesses that benefit from event-driven foot traffic. It also undermines job opportunities for Rhode Islanders working in technical production, hospitality, security, and event services—many of whom depend on consistent programming at local venues.

Rather than imposing new barriers, we urge you to support policies that help Rhode Island's live entertainment industry recover, grow, and thrive. The passage of H 6334 would do the opposite. We respectfully ask you and the committee to reject this bill and preserve the competitiveness of Rhode Island's venues in a region already rich with cultural options.

Thank you for your consideration, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Brailsford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Cory Brailsford
Owner

Uptown Theater / Comedy Connection / Black Duck Tavern