

**RHODE ISLAND
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA &
MUSIC SCHOOL**
ROBERT SPANO, PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

May 21, 2025

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

Re: House Bill No. 6334

Dear Chairman Abney and honorable members of the House Finance Committee;

I write on behalf of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School (RIPO&MS) to Oppose House Bill No. 6334, which proposes the introduction of a ticket tax on venues with seating capacities exceeding 800. As Executive Director of the RI Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School, I'm concerned about the impact this bill would have on the RI Philharmonic, on the state-owned Veterans Memorial Auditorium (The VETS) where we perform, as well as many other organizations and venues that contribute to RI's cultural and economic vitality.

No other state in our region imposes such a tax on ticket sales, and with good reason: this tax would deter audience members from purchasing tickets and touring artists from using venues like The VETS, PPAC and the AMP. The combined effect would be less revenue for nonprofits like the Philharmonic, Trinity Rep and Ballet RI, fewer bookings for venues, and fewer customers for hotels, restaurants and small businesses that serve our artists, staff and audiences. All would lose revenue. Undoubtedly, many would go out of business.

At the RI Philharmonic we are proud to contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of RI, and to educate the artists, educators and entrepreneurs tomorrow. We are grateful to be the single largest tenant of state-owned VETS Auditorium, where we will pay over \$500,000 in rent and usage fees this year and have paid the state over \$3 million since 2013. We are proud to be part of the RI cultural economy that supports over 17,000 full-time-equivalent jobs, generates over \$2.2 Billion in annual economic activity and \$23 million in state and local taxes and fees, and makes invaluable contributions to our communities, schools and quality of life.

I urge you to reject H 6334 as an unwelcome and harmful tariff on the arts.

Sincerely,



David Beauchesne, Executive Director

m. 404 798-3294

dbeauchesne@riphil.org