

May 28, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

As former Mayor of Providence and Managing Partner of Paolino Properties, I'm writing to strongly oppose House Bill 6334, which would allow municipalities to impose a \$2-per-ticket tax on entertainment venues with 800 or more seats. This legislation targets the very institutions that help drive Providence's economic engine, and at the worst possible time.

When I served as Mayor, my focus was on revitalizing downtown: attracting jobs, restoring historic buildings, and strengthening the arts as a way to bring people into the city. That work hasn't stopped. As a developer and business owner, I've continued to invest in projects like The Beatrice Hotel and Bellini Restaurant because I believe in Providence's potential.

Venues like PPAC, The VETS, and Trinity Rep are cornerstones of that vision. They don't just put on great shows, they fill hotel rooms, keep restaurants busy, and keep our city vibrant. At The Beatrice, I see it clearly: when there's a big performance in town, we see it in our bookings and our dining room. This tax would discourage attendance, cut into that activity, and hurt the small businesses that depend on it.

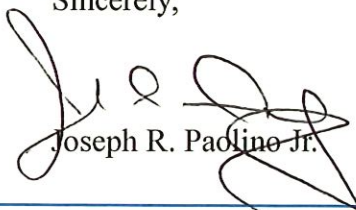
According to [Americans for the Arts](#), Providence's nonprofit arts sector generates \$205.8 million in annual economic activity, supports over 5,100 jobs, and delivers \$20.9 million in local and state revenue. These institutions are doing their part. We shouldn't be punishing them; we should be supporting them.

Meanwhile, tourism is rebounding. In 2023, [Rhode Island Commerce](#) reported that our state welcomed 28.4 million visitors, generating \$935 million in tax revenue and supporting over 86,000 jobs. People come here for the culture. If we start taxing tickets in a way no other state in New England does, we risk pushing that business elsewhere.

This tax won't help our economy, it'll shrink it. I urge you to vote no on House Bill 6334. Let's keep building on the momentum we've all worked so hard to create.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Joseph R. Paolino Jr.