

Dear Committee members:

I would like to add my voice to the efforts to create a Rhode Island state museum. As you've heard, ad infinitum, the tiniest state has no centralized place to store and exhibit artifacts and library materials. This is particularly criminal when we stand on the brink of the nation's 250th anniversary. Criminal because we played such an outsized role in the movement for independence. Our rich and courageous actions helped swing the country to independence.

Not passing the modest legislation to enact Secretary of State Greg Amore's streamlined plans to correct the lack of such an institution would only reinforce our negative image in this field.

Imagine if the patriots who attacked the British tax collecting vessel The Gaspee had overslept that fateful day; conceive of the RI colony which Roger Williams overlooked because of a better deal somewhere else; picture Samuel Ward and Stephen Hopkins refusing to talk to each other and missing the chance to refute the Intolerable Acts eventually leading to the Continental Congress.

I taught state history at URI for 30 years; provided several hundred lectures over the course of my career in the classroom and around our communities; and wrote several scholarly books as well as articles, OP-EDS, and other pieces. Our residents come alive when they hear the story or observe the artifacts.

Let's put Rhode Island back at our country's center stage.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Molloy, Ph.D

URI Professor Emeritus

