

Chris O'Brien

From: Heather Pouliot Kisilywicz MLIS <heather@ancestoranswers.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 1:30 PM
To: LeeAnn Byrne
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: My support for the new Rhode Island History Center

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It is not clear where I should be sending my letter of support to. Could you please provide some direction?

To Chair Abney and the members of the House Committee on Finance –

I write today in support of the proposal included in the Governor's budget for the Rhode Island State History Center, funded by \$45 million of the general obligation bond in question 6.

An original colony, Rhode Island is fortunate to have a rich and storied history, and to have played an integral role in the American Revolution.

Unfortunately, Rhode Islanders are not afforded the benefit of a permanent space in which they can experience the state's treasures up close. Instead, they are kept out of sight for preservation purposes. We should be able to have both – and a State History Center with dedicated, safe exhibit space for our archival materials where Rhode Islanders can see them.

Not only would this benefit Rhode Islanders – students on field trips, local historians, and so many others – but it would serve as a tourism driver and capitalize on what we know is a booming historic tourism industry.

As a cultural heritage professional and professional genealogist, I'm aware that the State Archives number one request is from genealogists. Those genealogists are also museum goers and want to get a better sense of place for context in their research. This center is long overdue and it would place Rhode Island in the proper historical light it deserves.

As we recognize our nation's semiquincentennial anniversary, the State History Center is an ideal project to leave a lasting legacy on our state.

Heather Pouliot Kisilywicz

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Taûbotneanawáyea (Thank you)

Heather Pouliot Kisilywicz, Marketing Manager
heatherk@tomaquagmuseum.org 401-491-9063
390A Summit Road, Exeter, Rhode Island 02822
[Website](#)

