



**Letter of Support – RI State History Center
FY2027 budget, Article 6 Question 6**

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 and visitors to the Ocean State 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.

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has always advocated for the recognition of our region's and state's important history. The Rhode Island State History Center is a logical and necessary next step in sharing our impactful place in American history to a wide audience.

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

James Toomey
Executive Director
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

