

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express the Professional Staff Association @ Rhode Island College strong support for several items in H7127 that are essential to Rhode Island College's work in expanding access, strengthening student success, and preparing more Rhode Islanders for in-demand, high-quality jobs.

1. Hope Scholarship – Article 7, Sections 4 and 5

The Hope Scholarship continues to demonstrate positive impacts on student enrollment, retention, and graduation. It remains one of the most effective tools we have to keep Rhode Islanders on a path toward economic mobility and a stronger state workforce. Currently, the scholarship program is funded through June 30th, 2030, which means the last cohort of students that will be eligible for the full Hope Scholarship are those enrolling in the fall of 2026. By making Hope permanent, Rhode Island will continue to experience a positive impact from our graduates.

2. Student Success and Career Readiness Center at Adams Library – Article 6, Project 1(b)

The proposed \$50 million G.O. Bond supporting renovations to Adams Library will create a centralized Student Success and Career Readiness Center serving all 6,600+ Rhode Island College students. This transformative capital project aligns with the college's strategic priorities and the state's economic goals by creating a centralized, student-centered facility that prepares learners for success in both college and career. Tentative completion is slated for FY 2030.

3. RIHEBC Revenue Bond for Residence Hall Improvements – Article 4, Section 2

Upgrading Rhode Island College's residence halls is essential to addressing significant deferred maintenance and improving the student living experience. On-campus housing plays a vital role in supporting students, fostering a strong campus community, and enriching student life. Because existing debt service ends this fiscal year, this bond will have minimal impact on the college's expense base. By leveraging expiring debt, there will not be new costs incurred to the state.

Each of these initiatives strengthens Rhode Island's education pipeline, workforce readiness, and economic future. I respectfully urge your support for their inclusion in the FY27 budget.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Dennis Sousa

President, PSA@RIC

