



11 February 2026

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of House Finance Committee,

We are writing to express our enthusiasm for three items in H7127 that will help enhance our ability at Rhode Island College to serve our students and build Rhode Island's future.

Hope Scholarship [Article 7, Sections 4 and 5]

The Hope Scholarship has been a game-changer for our students. Before the enacting of the Hope Scholarship program, many Rhode Island College students started running out of money by their junior year. Today, academically-successful students are able to stay enrolled and graduate with less debt, preparing them for impactful lives after graduation. Students are more able to consider graduate education, to afford to live where they work, and to build families and futures here in Rhode Island. Investing in permanency for Hope will help today's high school students stay engaged with school and prepare for college knowing that this option will remain available for them.

Student Success and Career Readiness Center at Adams Library [Article 6, Project 1(b)]

The General Obligation Bond for Adams Library will enhance our ability to provide the support our students need to succeed in both college and career. It will enable the centralization of student support resources in one location, as well as providing for necessary capital improvements in the library facility itself. As we can all see around us today, information literacy is one of the core competencies necessary for engaged citizenship and career impact, and our library and faculty librarians are the key to ensuring that Rhode Island College graduates leave college with the information literacy skills necessary for their futures.

RIHEBC Revenue Bond for Residence Hall Improvements [Article 4, Section 2]

While most Rhode Island College students are commuters, we cannot ignore the importance of providing modernized housing options for those students who want or need to live on campus. Students who live on campus help to ensure that all students have a robust student experience, including the opportunity to participate in student activities, campus events, work-study experiences, and leadership opportunities. This measure is proposed as a revenue bond, so approving it will involve minimal costs while ensuring a great experience for our students.



All three of these initiatives are important for Rhode Island College to continue to build Rhode Island's future. Our students stay here in the state after graduating and are our future artists, teachers, nurses, social workers, bankers, computer programmers, law enforcement officers, scientific technicians, museum professionals, legislators, and more. Investing in the Hope Scholarship and in our facilities is an investment that will continue to pay dividends for our entire community, and thus we urge you to support their inclusion in the FY27 budget.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Rhode Island College and for our students, and for all the work you do on behalf of our state.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, *President, RIC/AFT Local 1819*

Dr. Vincent Bohlinger, *Chair, Committee on Political Education, RIC/AFT Local 1819*

Dr. Rebecca Sparks, *Vice President, RIC/Aft Local 1819*