



*Our City. Our Future.*

Chairperson & Members of the Committee,

My name is Garrett Mancieri, former City Council Member from Woonsocket for 5 years, and current Board Chair of the local main street board, the Downtown Woonsocket Collaborative. I am submitting this letter to testify in support of what will be one of the most successful programs that you could have here in the state of Rhode Island. Main Streets are an essential part of all of our communities. Main Street programs have been active for over 45 years throughout the country and currently being run in 43 states. We are clearly in the minority of states in the country and our economy is struggling because of it.

I hope that you all see the value of using the tax dollars that we do have to see actual results. What if I told you that for every \$1 you invest in a Rhode Island Main Street program, you would get back \$30. I am currently in Tulsa, OK and we just heard the numbers which include 115 billion dollars in reinvestment in downtowns and 180,000 new jobs across the country. The State of Georgia which has a robust Main Street program just made history with 1 billion dollars of reinvestment in their downtowns. Those are the facts and I would like to challenge to see any other economic program come before you with better results. Increasing property values, reducing taxes, creating and retaining jobs, boosting revenue for small businesses, bringing in tourism dollars, beautifying public spaces, more public events, hiring local contractors, and improving your downtown's reputation are all things you can support.

Even in a conservative state of Oklahoma, the Department of Commerce has a division for their Main Street program. That has resulted in 50 communities state wide. The Governor made it clear that he understands the value that Main Street programs can do and I hope my state will also understand that. If Rhode Island chooses to invest less in actual programs that bring in money, you will continue to cut more and more programs in every budget and only make the situation worse.

You have the money in your hands and it gets spent every year in various programs. \$31,000,000 in the Economic Development Initiative Fund, \$3,745,000 approximately for commerce programs, 18 million for Quasi-Public Agencies, and we are here to ask for \$150,000. Not much of an ask in my opinion and I guarantee that you will want to fund more once we see what we can do for all of your constituents. We fully support Grow Smart RI as the main driver that can get this program launched because they have that experience and support around the state. Please include this allocation in the budget by supporting H8316 and S2676 and let's get to work making our history our future.

*Garrett S. Mancieri*

Garrett Mancieri  
Board Chair