



April 30, 2026

Representative Marvin Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Opposition to H7052 as Written – Rhode Island Promise Scholarship Expansion

Dear Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee:

On behalf of the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT), we write to **respectfully oppose H7052 as written**, while offering comments and a proposed amendment intended to strengthen the legislation and better protect Rhode Island students and workforce outcomes.

NEIT supports the underlying goals of the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship and the General Assembly's continued focus on affordability, credential attainment, and workforce development. We also recognize the importance of expanding access to workforce-ready credentials. Our concern is that, absent targeted safeguards, the current language of H7052 may produce unintended consequences that negatively affect students' long-term educational mobility and degree completion.

As drafted, expanding Promise eligibility to additional certificate programs may encourage students to utilize a significant portion of their federal and state financial aid eligibility early in their postsecondary pathway. When these students later seek to continue their education, particularly through transfer to complete an associate or bachelor's degree, they may encounter substantial financial barriers due to depleted aid eligibility. This risk is especially acute in career-focused fields where continued education is often necessary for advancement and wage growth.

To address this concern while preserving the Community College of Rhode Island's central role in the Promise program, NEIT respectfully proposes a narrowly tailored amendment that allows eligible students to use Rhode Island Promise funds at another accredited Rhode Island institution **only when a comparable program is not offered at CCRI**. This approach supports student choice, avoids unnecessary program duplication, and aligns state investment with unmet workforce needs.

Specifically, NEIT recommends adding the following provision to § 16-107-6 of the General Laws:

“Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, an otherwise eligible student may elect to utilize the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship at an accredited postsecondary institution located in Rhode Island, other than the Community College of Rhode Island, provided that:

(1) The student is enrolled in a workforce-ready certificate or degree program aligned with high-demand occupations as determined by the Council on Postsecondary Education;

(2) A comparable program is not offered by the Community College of Rhode Island; and

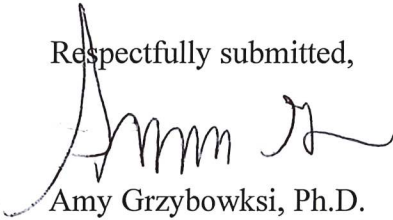
(3) The institution meets accreditation, reporting, and accountability requirements established by the Council.”

This amendment preserves the intent of Rhode Island Promise while ensuring students are not inadvertently steered into pathways that limit future educational opportunity. It also promotes efficient use of public resources by leveraging existing workforce capacity across Rhode Island’s higher education system.

NEIT continues to stand ready to work collaboratively with the General Assembly, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, CCRI, and other stakeholders to refine H7052 in a manner that advances access, completion, and workforce success for Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on behalf of Rhode Island students.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Grzybowksi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amy Grzybowksi, Ph.D.
Vice President of Workforce Development
& Community Relations

CC: Speaker K Joseph Shekarchi,
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel, House Speaker’s Office
Representative Samuel Azzinaro