



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF RHODE ISLAND
Office of the President

April 28, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 7052, An Act Relating to Education – Rhode Island Promise Scholarship

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

I write to you today in strong support of H 7052, which makes important enhancements to the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship. On behalf of the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and the students we serve, I commend Representative Azzinaro and the co-sponsors of this legislation for their leadership in advancing a bill that aligns with our shared goals of expanding access to higher education and strengthening Rhode Island's workforce.

Since its inception, the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship has been a transformative initiative for our state, making higher education accessible and affordable for thousands of students. However, in its current form, the program does not include students pursuing credit-bearing certificate programs, even as these credentials are increasingly in demand across our economy.

CCRI has introduced a growing number of workforce-ready, credit-bearing certificate programs—including in high-need fields such as cybersecurity, surgical technology, and court reporting—designed to respond directly to employer needs and help students quickly earn credentials that lead to meaningful employment.

H 7052 takes an important step forward by extending Promise eligibility to students enrolled in these rigorous and career-relevant pathways. Many of these certificate programs are stackable and serve as entry points to associate degrees, making them a critical component of Rhode Island's workforce and economic development strategy.

The bill also makes a thoughtful, student-centered improvement by allowing for limited flexibility in the timing of enrollment. The current requirement that students enroll full-time at CCRI in the fall immediately following high school graduation does not reflect the realities many students face. Life circumstances—such as family responsibilities, health challenges, or financial barriers—can delay a student's ability to begin college on a traditional timeline.

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Allowing for a one-semester extension of eligibility, with an approved request, acknowledges that the path to a degree or credential is not always linear and provides students with the flexibility they need to succeed. Similarly, permitting students who begin their postsecondary journey at another institution in the fall to access Promise upon enrolling at CCRI in the spring ensures that students are supported when their plans evolve.

At CCRI, we believe every student deserves access to affordable, high-quality education. H 7052 reflects that belief and represents a meaningful and practical strengthening of the Rhode Island Promise program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary A. Costigan".

Rosemary A. Costigan, Ph.D., RN
President