



29 April 2026

Testimony in Support of House Bill 8336.

Dear Chairman Marvin Abney and the members of the House Finance Committee,

We are writing today to express our enthusiastic support of House Bill 8336, converting the pilot Hope Scholarship Program into a continuing scholarship. As faculty at Rhode Island College, we have seen firsthand the tremendous impact that the Hope Scholarship already has had on our students.

The Hope Scholarship has been a game-changer for our students. Before Hope, 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.

The Hope Scholarship enhances Rhode Island College's mission to continue to build Rhode Island's future. Our students stay here in the state after graduating and are our future entrepreneurs, artists, teachers, nurses, social workers, bankers, computer programmers, law enforcement officers, scientific technicians, museum professionals, legislators, and more. The Hope Scholarship will continue to pay dividends for our entire community: a more educated workforce, a more enlightened citizenry, a larger tax base.

We are thrilled by this investment in RIC—growing our capacity to serve our students and the state. Thank you for your ongoing support of our students, and for all the work you do on behalf of our state!

Thank you,

A blue ink signature of Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes.

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, Ph.D.
President, RIC/AFT Local 1819
Providence, RI

A blue ink signature of Rebecca Sparks, featuring a stylized, cursive script.

Rebecca Sparks, Ph.D.
Vice President, RIC/AFT Local 1819
Lincoln, RI

A blue ink signature of Vincent Bohlinger, written in a cursive style.

Vincent Bohlinger, Ph.D.
Chair, Committee on Political Education, RIC/AFT Local 1819
Warwick, RI