



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

April 30, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance

RE: In support of H8389 – An Act Relating to Education – University of Rhode Island

Dear Chair Abney,

Rhode Islanders deserve quality healthcare, and that is rooted in the availability of highly skilled and trained doctors and medical professionals. Therefore, I write this letter in support of House Bill 8389, legislation that will fund the initial establishment and development of a public medical school at the University of Rhode Island.

As this Committee understands well, our State is undergoing a healthcare crisis – we have seen the closure of hospitals and the merger of others, and, at the same time, rising costs of health insurance and medical care. While we feel the repercussions of a flawed healthcare and health insurance system nationally, in our state, our friends and families have been struggling for the last several years to access Primary Care Physicians (PCPs). Patients have either had to wait several months for an appointment, cross state lines, or visit urgent care for basic healthcare services.

Last fall, the Senate Special Legislative Commission on Rhode Island Primary Care Physician Workforce and Education met to address this gap in our healthcare infrastructure. As someone who is not an expert in this field but has served as a State Representative for over ten years, I know there may be different proposed solutions to address a problem as significant as the current PCP shortage, and that many of these policies could help mitigate this crisis. However, investing in establishing a public medical school at URI seems to be at least one solution that will help all of us in the long term. This is why it is imperative that our State invests in opportunities to train and retain medical professionals who can serve Rhode Islanders.

Overall, I urge this Committee and the full House to support House Bill 8389, as the potential positive impact that establishing a public medical school will have not only addresses the PCP shortage, but it will also legitimize our higher public education infrastructure and advance the State's biomedical and healthcare fields, and, subsequently, improve our State's economy and workforce.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Kathleen A. Fogarty

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

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