



May 12, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL H8252 — RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COUNCIL
ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we express our strong support for House Bill H8252, which would strengthen access to in-state tuition at Rhode Island public universities, colleges, and community colleges for students who attended an approved Rhode Island high school for at least one year, continue to reside in Rhode Island, and have graduated from a Rhode Island high school or received a Rhode Island high school equivalency diploma. The bill would take effect on July 1, 2026.

United Way's policy and advocacy work is guided by our strategic framework: **Strong Families, Strong Nonprofits, Strong United Way.** We prioritize policies that strengthen household stability, expand access to opportunity, and ensure public systems deliver measurable value. This includes centering ALICE households — Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed — households. ALICE families work, yet find themselves priced out of stability by the high cost of living basics, including housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology.

H8252 is a practical investment in educational opportunity and workforce readiness. Students who live in Rhode Island, attend Rhode Island schools, and graduate from Rhode Island high schools should have a fair and accessible pathway to continue their education within our state. By reducing barriers to in-state tuition, this legislation helps more students pursue postsecondary education, workforce training, and credentials that can lead to stronger employment and long-term economic stability.

This bill is especially important for students and families who are already facing financial pressure. For many ALICE households, the cost of higher education can determine whether a young person is able to enroll, persist, and complete a degree or credential. Expanding access to in-state tuition helps keep Rhode Island students connected to Rhode Island institutions, Rhode Island employers, and Rhode Island's future workforce.

United Way of Rhode Island respectfully urges your support for House Bill H8252. Strengthening access to affordable postsecondary education is an investment in students, families, workforce development, and Rhode Island's long-term economic future.

Sincerely,



Elijah McLean
Manager, Government Relations & Policy
United Way of Rhode Island