



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 14, 2026

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

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I support of House Bill 7706 which would appropriate \$500,000 to support the continued operation and strengthening of United Way of Rhode Island's 211 system.

United Way 211 is Rhode Island's 24/7, multilingual, confidential human services helpline which connects residents to critical supports including housing, food, utilities, healthcare, behavioral health, childcare, older adult services, disability supports, and crisis assistance. For many residents, 211 is the first place they turn when they do not know where else to go.

In Providence, residents rely on 211 for help navigating urgent needs such as housing, food, and utilities. As local leaders, we see how important it is to have a trusted statewide resource that can help residents to access support quickly, confidentially, and effectively.

United Way 211 also strengthens municipal and state service delivery. It helps reduce confusion for residents, supports referrals to nonprofit and public-sector partners, and provides valuable insight into the needs facing communities across Rhode Island. Increased investment in 211 would help sustain this key public infrastructure and ensure residents in every city and town can connect to help when they need it most.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your support for House Bill 7706 and the proposed \$500,000 state appropriation for United Way 211.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to the well-being of Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brett Smiley".

Brett P. Smiley
Mayor