



**THE RHODE ISLAND
SMALL BUSINESS
COALITION**

Testimony in support of the Supplemental Appropriations Request

October 19, 2021

Honorable Chairperson Abney and members of the House Finance Committee:

I am Christopher Parisi, the Co-Founder and Chair of the RI Small Business Coalition. We are a 501(c)(6) organization advocating for our Rhode Island small businesses and comprised of over 1,600 registered members.

After listening to our members and understanding the impact that COVID-19 still has on our small businesses, I support the Supplemental Request to Amend FY 2022, specifically the \$32,000,000 requested for Impacted Small Business and Industry and the \$13,000,000 requested for Tourism, Hospitality, and Events Industry Support.

We can not let our small businesses fail when we have the opportunity to help them now. We are consistently hearing of businesses shutting down or only having a month or two left until they have to close their doors. The impact COVID has had on their business still exists, whether the travel agency whose revenue is still down by 75% compared to 2019 or the dance studios whose attendance rate dropped in half.

Our members are now more organized and more desperate than ever, and we want to work with you and the General Assembly to ensure we effectively and swiftly support the backbone of our great state – the small business community.

The \$32 million requested by the Governor to provide direct financial assistance to these businesses is a vital lifeline to keep many of these small businesses alive. And the tourism, hospitality and events industries are still getting crushed, and in desperate of additional support. The \$13 million requested would be a step in the right direction.

Respectfully, I urge the Committee to vote this Supplemental Appropriations Request forward to the full House. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Parisi, *Co-Founder & Chair*