



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF RHODE ISLAND
Office of the President

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robert Craven
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 5666: An Act Relating to Education – Maintenance of Order on Campus

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I write to you today regarding H 5666, which would require that CCRI campus police officers carry firearms after completing the required training. I want to thank you, the sponsors of the legislation, and the committee for your continued focus on the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

The recent incident at CCRI's Lincoln Campus has underscored both the challenges and importance of ensuring campus safety. We recognize that the incident was unsettling for many in our community and that there were moments of confusion as events unfolded. As an institution committed to learning and continuous improvement, we take seriously the responsibility to evaluate our response and enhance our preparedness. To that end, we have requested the Rhode Island State Police to conduct an after-action review of the incident and provide recommendations to strengthen our campus safety protocols, communication strategies, and emergency preparedness efforts. This review is currently in process. These recommendations will be shared with our college community and the Council on Postsecondary Education for further discussion and guidance.

CCRI's Campus Police department is staffed by well-trained officers, many of whom are retired municipal police officers, dedicated to protecting and serving our college community. Our officers maintain strong partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, ensuring rapid response capabilities in times of emergency. The college has also taken proactive steps to enhance security, including providing non-lethal protective equipment and conducting regular emergency management exercises.

We recognize that the question of arming campus police is a complex one, and any discussion of such a policy must take into account the diverse perspectives of our community.

The implementation of this legislation would require significant investment in officer training, equipment, and infrastructure to ensure the highest standards of safety and preparedness. The necessary firearms training and certification for our officers could take up to two years to complete, given the number of officers, the level of training required, and the need to maintain continuous police coverage at all four campuses. Further, substantial funding would be required to secure appropriate equipment, including body-worn cameras, develop and implement firearm policies, and provide ongoing training to maintain proficiency and ensure compliance with accreditation standards, and cover anticipated salary increases for armed officers, all of which would bring additional long-term financial commitments to the college.

CCRI is part of a larger system of higher education and values the input of the Council on Postsecondary Education, Rhode Island College and above all else, our students, faculty, and staff, in shaping our approach to campus safety. Should this legislation move forward, careful and thoughtful implementation will be essential, with particular attention to training, policy development, community engagement, and securing the necessary financial resources.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with state leaders and stakeholders to ensure the safest possible learning environment for all. I welcome the opportunity to engage in continued dialogue on this important issue and appreciate your consideration of the unique needs of our college community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rosemary A. Costigan".

Rosemary A. Costigan, Ph.D., RN
Interim President
Community College of Rhode Island