



**April 28, 2026**

The Honorable Joseph Solomon  
Chair, House Committee on Corporations  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Letter of Support for House Bills H7839/H8128: An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Public Accountancy**

Dear Chairperson Solomon and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (RIMA), and in my role as Chairman, Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance, I write in strong support of **House Bills H7839/H8128: An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Public Accountancy**, legislation that represents a critical and timely step forward in modernizing CPA licensure in Rhode Island.

This legislation is part of a broader national movement to modernize the accounting profession while maintaining its high standards. As of this week, **28 states have enacted CPA licensure pathway modernization**, with another **20 additional states—including Rhode Island and Massachusetts—actively advancing legislation this year**. Only two states, North Dakota and Wyoming, are expected to delay action until 2027 due to legislative calendar limitations. This momentum reflects a clear and coordinated national effort to address workforce challenges and ensure the profession remains strong and accessible.

House Bills 7839 and 8128 preserve the integrity of the CPA license while introducing **multiple pathways to licensure**, recognizing that today's candidates have diverse educational and professional learning styles. This flexibility is essential to attracting and retaining talent in a profession that is experiencing well-documented pipeline challenges nationwide.

Importantly, the bill also strengthens **interstate mobility**, which is critical in a region like ours. Rhode Island's workforce is highly interconnected with neighboring states, particularly Connecticut. Many professionals live in one state and work in another, and

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many CPA firms operate across state lines. Alignment in licensure standards helps remove unnecessary barriers for both individuals and employers.

Rhode Island must remain competitive and cannot afford to be an outlier—particularly as Connecticut has already implemented these reforms and Massachusetts has advanced similar legislation through its Senate and is actively considering it in the House. The majority of CPA firms operating in Rhode Island also have offices in neighboring states, making regional alignment even more important.

The urgency of this legislation is further underscored by the **declining pipeline of CPA candidates**. Across the country, firms—especially small and mid-sized firms—are facing increasing difficulty recruiting and retaining talent. Rhode Island is no exception. Our members – and the business community – rely heavily on CPAs to support small businesses, manufacturers, nonprofits, and growing companies. A strong CPA pipeline is essential to economic stability, compliance, and growth.

This issue is not new. During my tenure as CEO of the Rhode Island Society of CPAs, modernization of licensure pathways was consistently identified by our members as a top priority. In 2024, at the request of the Society, Bonnie Stewart participated in discussions with the Rhode Island Board of Accountancy to share insights and help address key questions. That level of interstate collaboration reflects both the importance and urgency of this issue.

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns first brought the issue to the attention of state leaders – and the Society with the majority of the 39 cities and towns experiencing challenges finding qualified CPAs – the pipeline issue has only deteriorated across the state. It is my understanding that the number of licensed CPAs in Rhode Island is at a record low – something that has also impacted our state colleges and universities.

Connecticut serves as a strong and credible proof point. Through the leadership of Bonnie Stewart, CEO of the Connecticut Society of CPAs, Connecticut enacted similar legislation during its 2025 session with **unanimous support in both chambers**, a rare and notable achievement. The law took effect on October 1, 2025, and early results demonstrate strong engagement from candidates. This early success illustrates that modernization is not theoretical—it is already working. It is helping align licensure with how individuals learn and how employers hire.



House bills 7839 and 8128 align Rhode Island with the **9th edition of the Uniform Accountancy Act**, providing a nationally consistent framework that balances flexibility with rigor. It ensures that the CPA license continues to protect the public while evolving to meet the needs of today's workforce and economy.

For Rhode Island, passage of this legislation will:

- Strengthen the CPA talent pipeline
- Enhance regional workforce mobility
- Support businesses and organizations that rely on CPA expertise
- Align Rhode Island with national standards and neighboring states

At a time when our economy depends on strong financial leadership and trusted advisors, this legislation is both practical and necessary.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support and advance H7839 and H8128

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melissa Travis*

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President/CEO  
Rhode Island Manufacturers Association