

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Robert Britto
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee
82 Smith Street, House Lounge
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 3076: An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Public Accountancy

Dear Chairperson Britto and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bonnie Stewart, and I serve as the CEO and Executive Director of the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants (CTCPA), representing thousands of CPAs across Connecticut. For several years, I have been actively involved, both in Connecticut and nationally, in efforts to modernize CPA licensure pathways and strengthen interstate mobility.

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Committee for bringing forward this legislation and for acting on this important matter this year. I would also like to thank the Board of Accountancy for their efforts to bring Rhode Island's statutes in line with the Uniform Accountancy Act, especially the enhanced mobility and additional pathway to licensure. These updates to Rhode Island's public accountancy laws are both timely and critically important.

Rhode Island's workforce and economy are closely interconnected with Connecticut's. Many professionals live in one state and work in another, particularly between Connecticut and Rhode Island. Ensuring alignment in licensure standards and mobility provisions reduces unnecessary barriers, supports workforce flexibility, and helps employers access the talent they need.

This legislation is especially important at a time when the accounting profession is facing a well-documented pipeline challenge. Nationally, the number of CPA exam candidates has declined over the past several years, and firms, particularly small and mid-sized firms, are experiencing increasing difficulty recruiting and retaining talent. In Rhode Island, where the business community relies heavily on trusted financial professionals to support small businesses, nonprofits, and growing companies, maintaining a strong pipeline of CPAs is essential to economic stability and growth.

Connecticut addressed these same challenges in our 2025 legislative session, when we passed comprehensive legislation modernizing CPA licensure. The measure passed unanimously in both the House and Senate, an outcome that is quite rare in our state, and went into effect on October 1, 2025. The legislation was developed through close collaboration between CTCPA and the Connecticut State Board of Accountancy, and we worked together to both request and advocate for its passage.

After years of working on various pieces of legislation across a wide range of issues, it has been incredibly rewarding to see the immediate and positive impact of modernization in Connecticut. Although the law only took effect in October, by late December and early January, we were already seeing strong candidate engagement.

Through LinkedIn and direct feedback, we observed individuals actively choosing among the three pathways established under the new law:

- Some continued to pursue the traditional master's degree pathway.
- Others chose a bachelor's degree plus two years of experience, noting that they are experiential learners who gain and retain knowledge more effectively through hands-on work.
- Still others selected the bachelor's degree plus 30 additional credits pathway, often combining accounting with coursework in areas such as IT and data analytics, skills that are highly valued by employers today.

Seeing individuals immediately take advantage of pathways that best align with their learning styles and career goals has been both encouraging and instructive. In a very short period of time, the legislation has already begun to make a meaningful difference.

Connecticut's efforts are part of a broader, coordinated national movement. CTCPA has been engaged from the early stages of this work, collaborating with a core group of stakeholders across the country, including state societies, boards of accountancy, and national organizations, to help ensure that modernization is implemented thoughtfully and consistently. We have also worked with other states when asked, just as we benefited from the insights of states that shared their experiences with us.

Maintaining interstate mobility has been a central priority throughout this effort. Mobility is a defining feature of the CPA profession and is essential to serving clients across state lines efficiently and effectively.

As of today, nearly every state has either passed or is actively advancing modernization legislation. If Rhode Island enacts Senate Bill 3076 this year, it will be fully aligned with this national framework.

I have also had the opportunity to engage directly with Rhode Island stakeholders on this issue. In 2024, at the request of the Rhode Island Society of CPAs, I had the privilege of speaking with the Rhode Island Board of Accountancy, alongside its Board Chair, Michele Forcino, and the Society's CEO, Melissa Travis.

Senate Bill 3076, which aligns Rhode Island's statute with the 9th edition of the Uniform Accountancy Act, represents a well-considered and nationally consistent approach. It preserves the rigor and integrity of the CPA license while introducing flexibility that better reflects how today's candidates learn and develop professionally.

Modernization is about ensuring the profession remains strong, accessible, and responsive to the needs of both candidates and employers, while continuing to protect the public.

For Rhode Island, adopting this legislation will:

- Strengthen the CPA pipeline
- Enhance regional workforce mobility
- Support businesses and organizations that rely on CPA expertise
- Ensure alignment with national standards and neighboring states

For all of these reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to support and advance Senate Bill 3076.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie Stewart
CEO and Executive Director
Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants