

The Honorable Robert Britto
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 0290

Re: Testimony in Support of H.7839 / S.3076- *An Act Relative to Modernizing the Pathway to Becoming a Certified Public Accountant*

Dear Chairman Britto, and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.7839 / S.3076, legislation to modernize the pathway to becoming a certified public accountant in Rhode Island.

This bill represents a thoughtful and important step toward strengthening the accounting profession across the State of Rhode Island while maintaining the high standards that protect the public. The current CPA licensure framework, which consists of 150 credit hours of education, one year of professional experience, and passage of the CPA Exam, has served the profession well. However, it has also created unintended barriers to entry, contributing to a growing workforce shortage both nationally and here in Rhode Island.

H.7839 / S.3076 does not eliminate the existing pathway. Instead, it introduces an additional pathway that maintains the rigor associated with the license while providing flexibility to improve access to the profession. Under this proposal, candidates may qualify for licensure by completing:

- A bachelor's degree with required accounting and business coursework
- Two years of relevant professional experience
- Successful completion of the CPA Exam

Rhode Island's small business community, nonprofit sector, and public institutions all rely heavily on CPAs. However, firms across the state are facing increasing difficulty recruiting and retaining talent. This legislation helps expand the pipeline by creating a more accessible, but still rigorous, pathway into the profession.

CPAs play a vital role in safeguarding the financial integrity of businesses, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. This bill preserves all core components of licensure while

ensuring that all licensed CPAs continue to meet high professional standards and uphold the public trust.

We commend the Rhode Island Board of Accountancy for proactively advancing this legislation. Their leadership reflects a commitment to balancing workforce needs with the responsibility to protect the public.

As of today, more than 35 states have already adopted similar CPA pathway reforms. Aligning Rhode Island with these states is essential to preserving CPA mobility, which allows licensed professionals to serve clients across state lines without additional licensure barriers. Maintaining this alignment ensures Rhode Island businesses and residents continue to have access to CPA services. This legislation reflects a broader national movement to reduce unnecessary barriers to entry while preserving the integrity of the CPA license. It is a balanced, practical solution that supports both the profession and the public.

A strong and sustainable CPA pipeline is critical to Rhode Island's economic health. CPAs support entrepreneurs, advise growing businesses, assist municipalities, and help ensure financial transparency across sectors. Modernizing the licensure pathway will help Rhode Island remain competitive in attracting and retaining accounting talent.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to support H.7839 / S.3076 and advance this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource to the Committee.

Sincerely,

Jason DaPonte, CPA, CIT, CCIFP
Managing Partner at Sansiveri, Kimball & Co.,
Chair of The Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants

