

Dana Borrelli-Murray, CEO
Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England
Senate Bill S2432

Chairperson Gallo and Committee- My name is Dana Borrelli-Murray, CEO of Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England.

At Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England, we serve about 4,000 girls each year, many from families who are working incredibly hard to support their children's futures. We serve girls in every single zip code.

Thirty percent of our Girl Scout families receive financial aid, and we serve many blue-collar working families who think every day about access, affordability, and opportunity after high school. Additionally, 20 percent of the girls we serve participate in Community Partnership Troops, designed specifically to reach girls in historically marginalized communities who may have fewer pathways into higher education.

The Gold Award—the highest achievement in Girl Scouting—is already an extraordinary accomplishment. Fewer than two percent of Girl Scouts earn it. It requires a minimum 80-hour, self-directed leadership project, deep community engagement, and rigorous review. But for many families, especially those navigating financial barriers, the question is always: *What does this open up for my child?*

Automatic admission to Rhode Island's colleges and universities provides a clear, tangible answer.

For families, it reduces uncertainty and financial stress. It makes the pathway to college more visible and attainable.

And for our older Girl Scouts, it creates a powerful incentive to stay engaged through high school, complete their Gold Award, and see their leadership recognized in a meaningful way.

The least we can do as a state to reward and encourage the 1000s of hours of community service that flow into our state year through these projects is to take a bit of the pressure and stress off. What a gift.

This policy doesn't just retain talent—it rewards perseverance, leadership, and community impact, and it helps ensure that the young women we are developing as leaders can build their futures right here in Rhode Island.