



March 12, 2026

Hon. Lou DiPalma
Chair
Senate Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903
SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: Article 6 of the Governor's Budget - Question 1: Higher Education

Dear Chair DiPalma,

BuildRI is a domestic non-profit trade association comprised of four (4) contractor associations (the Labor Relations Division of the RI Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, the New England Mechanical Contractors' Ass'n, the RI Mason Contractors' Ass'n, and the RI and Southeast MA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Ass'n), and seventeen (17) Local Trade Unions comprised of approximately 10,000 local tradesmen and women. On behalf of our organization, I writing with **strong support** regarding the above referred to provisions in the Governor's proposed budget for the reasons that follow.

Rhode Island voters have historically demonstrated strong support for investments in our public colleges and universities. These investments strengthen our state's economy, expand educational opportunities, and ensure that Rhode Island remains competitive in addressing current and future workforce needs. These developments also provide business opportunities for our local contractors who create thousands of good-paying, family-sustaining wages, with benefits, for the men and women of the Building Trades.

Specifically, Build Rhode Island supports the following components of the proposed bond:

The University of Rhode Island Integrated Health Building will support the construction of a new Integrated Health Building on URI's Kingston campus. This project will advance health education, expand clinical training opportunities for surrounding communities, and support workforce development in critical health-related fields. Providing an opportunity for URI students for on the job training, critical to ensuring a thriving healthcare system for both the patient and the providers.

The Rhode Island College Adams Library Renovations will help with student success and career readiness center, along with significant renovations to the Adams Library on the RIC campus. This project will modernize an essential campus facility, and enhance the student's learning experience.

The Community College of Rhode Island Workforce Innovation Center will support the construction of a new workforce innovation center on CCRI's Warwick campus. This modern career and technical education facility is designed to serve a broad and diverse population, adult learners, displaced workers, veterans, and individuals seeking new or upgraded skills. The Workforce Innovation Center will directly support workforce readiness

and help address critical labor shortages in fields such as construction, manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and other in-demand industries. By aligning education with real-world workforce needs, this center will serve as a vital pipeline connecting Rhode Islanders to meaningful careers and family-supporting wages.

Investments in our public education system are a win for all Rhode Islanders. They strengthen our workforce, stimulate economic growth, and create opportunities, both in the classroom and on the job site. The Governor's proposed Article 6 continues Rhode Island's proud tradition of investing in people, infrastructure, and the future of our state.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Building Trades respectfully urges the House of Representatives to support the Governor's proposed Article 6 – Question and to advance this important bond initiative for the benefit of students, workers, and communities across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to Rhode Island's future.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cherry
Assistant Executive Director
Build Rhode Island