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Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

February 26, 2026

Chairman Louis P. DiPalma
Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of Article 6 – Capitol Development Program – Question 6 Relating to a \$50M Cultural Economy Bond

Dear Chairman DiPalma and the members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

On behalf of the 80,000 members of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and our affiliated local unions, I write in support of the Governor’s FY2027 budget proposal to fund the Rhode Island State History Center through the \$45 million general obligation bond included in Article 6 – Capitol Development Program – Question 6. As a Rhode Islander, a labor leader, and a labor historian, I think this is a sound proposal that preserves our history for generations to come.

Rhode Island’s history is the history of working people. From the state’s earliest days, such as its integral role in the American Revolution, through the industrial era, and into the present, workers built this state. Yet much of that history remains stored away, out of public view. A permanent State History Center would give Rhode Islanders a place to see and learn from these materials while keeping them properly preserved.

This project is also a smart economic investment. It would create good union jobs, support tourism, and strengthen our local economy. It’s the kind of public investment that honors our past while investing in our future and putting people to work today.

As we approach the nation’s 250th anniversary, a State History Center is a lasting investment that reflects Rhode Island’s values and respects the contributions of generations of working people.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO urges your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Crowley
President, Rhode Island AFL-CIO

Patrick Crowley President • Karen Hazard Secretary-Treasurer
• Autumn Guillotte Political Director • Erica Hammond Legislative Director