

February 26, 2026

Senator Louis P. DiPalma
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

To Chair DiPalma and the members of the Senate Committee on Finance:

I write today regarding the proposal included in the Governor's budget for the Rhode Island State History Center, funded by \$45 million of the general obligation bond in question 6.

An original colony, Rhode Island is fortunate to have a rich and storied history, and to have played an integral role in the American Revolution, which we are commemorating this year. We at the Rhode Island Historical Society have been collecting, preserving, and sharing this history for over 200 years. While we protect and share the largest collection of Rhode Island's history in the world, we could not do our work without our partner organizations and our State Archives is chief among them.

Protecting our state's records is not merely something that would be nice to do, it is imperative to a thriving democracy, as well as being a legal and ethical necessity. The State Archives are the record of the State's business and, as such, deserve care, stewardship, and a place where they can be safely seen. Currently, the archives are in rented space with limited room in which to showcase Rhode Island's remarkable founding documents. Documents that are the foundation of our democracy, of religious liberty, and of working toward a more perfect union.

From the plans I have seen, the proposed State History Center will have a dedicated, safe exhibit space for the most vulnerable and valuable archival treasures in its holdings, though not the full collections of the archives. With that said, this History Center would benefit Rhode Islanders – students on field trips, local historians, and many others, as well as tourists who are seeking to learn more about the history of this truly special place.

Sincerely,



C. Morgan Greffe, Ph.D.
Executive Director