



COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OF RHODE ISLAND

Office of the President

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Joseph McNamara  
Chair, House Committee on Education  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 2024 – HB 7355

Dear Chairman McNamara and members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of HB 7355, which would prohibit colleges and universities from withholding a student's transcript due to the student failing to pay any expenses owed to the college or university.

At the heart of CCRI's mission is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their financial situation, has the opportunity to earn a college degree. In the past several years, CCRI has taken a number of actions to remove financial barriers for our students, including eliminating fees to apply, register late, or seek credit for professional, military and lived experiences (credit for prior learning).

In line with the college's ongoing commitment to removing financial barriers to education and in alignment with the legislation before this committee, in 2022, CCRI stopped the practice of withholding transcripts, grades, credits or degrees due to outstanding balances.

CCRI recognizes that withholding transcripts, grades, credits, or degrees creates a potentially vicious cycle. We believe that preventing access to the very thing that would make it easier for a student to earn more money is a counterproductive approach.

CCRI supports the intent of this legislation and respectfully requests the sponsors consider removing the language allowing institutions to withhold a student's diploma or degree due to outstanding balances. The college believes this change will further remove unnecessary obstacles which prevent students from continuing their progress toward a degree or getting a high-quality job.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and our college.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary A. Costigan".

Rosemary A. Costigan, Ph.D., RN  
Interim President