



**The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
and Members of the House Finance Committee  
From: Adrienne Gagnon, DownCity Design  
RE: Testimony in Strong Support of House Bill No.8047  
Date: May 9, 2024**

**Statement of Support for House Bill No.8047 RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST)**

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to share my strong support for Bill HB.8047 introduced by Rep Shallcross Smith, which provides \$4 million to support after school and school vacation, summer learning workforce development programs for K-12 students with annual reports on status and programs.

My organization, DownCity Design, provides free afterschool and summer programs in which Providence County teens learn to design and build service projects to improve public spaces. I have seen firsthand the impact of quality OST learning programs on a young person's skill development, confidence, and mental health. DownCity Design is a member organization of the Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN), a partnership of organizations promoting young people's safety, healthy development and learning outside the traditional classroom.

I believe that every family should have the opportunity to choose from a range of high-quality, age-appropriate, affordable after school and summer programs. We have seen that these programs are essential to a child's success in school and life beyond. For many kids, these programs tap a learning style or interest they cannot access in the classroom and helps them grow. OST programs also help our state's economy by enabling working parents like myself to access care for their children during working hours.

There are over 59,000 RI Kids who do not have access to afterschool and summer learning programs. Bill HB.8047 is one-step closer to ensuring more RI kids have equitable access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Please help support these vital programs by passing in support of Bill HB.8047, so they can keep their doors open and lights on, and expand to serve even more of our state's young people.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Gagnon  
Executive Director