



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

***RE: SUPPORT – House Bill No. 8047, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION --
BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME***

Dear Chairman Abney:

I am writing today in support of the proposed House Bill 8047, the Building Opportunities in Out of School Time “BOOST” ACT, an important initiative to invest \$4 million dollars in Rhode Island children and families.

This bill supports high-quality out-of-school and workforce development programming for students in kindergarten through twelve, as well as professional development opportunities. The Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN) would create competitive requests for proposals and funding to support the programming would be allocated through the Rhode Island Foundation, RIAN’s fiscal sponsor. The Rhode Island Foundation has the systems and processes in place to manage these important funds in an efficient and responsible manner.

Additional resources for out-of-school programming are urgently needed in Rhode Island and supported by families. The America After 3PM Report, released in 2020, found that Rhode Island parents understand and support the important role after school and summer programs play in their child’s education. Ninety-one percent of our state’s parents with a child in an afterschool program are satisfied with the support offered to their child. Moreover, Rhode Island parents report that afterschool programs are a lifeline for working families, with 86 percent of parents agreeing that afterschool programs provide working parents with peace of mind. However, demand for afterschool is on the rise in Rhode Island. For every child in an afterschool program, three are waiting to get in. Unmet demand has increased from 30 percent in 2014 to 44 percent in 2020, and the number of children unable to access afterschool programs has grown to over 59,000 youth.

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The bill has widespread support in the afterschool, non-profit, and educational communities and we hope that this is the year for inclusion in the state budget.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



David Cicilline
President and CEO

cc: Representative Scott Slater, First Vice Chair; Representative Alex Marszalkowski, Second Vice Chair; Representative Karen Alzate; Representative Jacquelyn M. Baginski; Representative Nathan W. Biah; Representative Terri Cortvriend; Representative Grace Diaz; Representative John G. Edwards; Representative Raymond A. Hull; Representative George A. Nardone; Representative William W. O'Brien; Representative Brian J. Rea; Representative Teresa Ann Tanzi; Representative Camille Vella-Wilkinson