



March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 5666, Act Relating to Education – Maintenance of Order on Campus

Dear Chairman Craven,

I am writing to you regarding House Bill 5666, which proposes arming state college and university campus police departments and classifying them as law enforcement under the Law Enforcement Officers' Due Process, Accountability, and Transparency Act. We sincerely appreciate the Committee's dedication to public safety and its ongoing support for law enforcement officers.

While Rhode Island College has not taken an official position on this legislation, we are actively re-engaging in discussions on this critical issue in light of recent incidents. As we evaluate its feasibility and potential impact on our campus community, we remain steadfast in our commitment to maintaining a highly trained and professional campus police force that aligns with our institutional mission and values.

To ensure a comprehensive approach to campus security, Rhode Island College has initiated a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a campus vulnerability assessment. The findings from this assessment will be instrumental in guiding our next steps. Additionally, we look forward to reviewing the Rhode Island State Police's evaluation of the recent incident at the Flanagan campus of the Community College of Rhode Island and considering their recommendations. As part of this process, we are committed to collaborating with our sister institution and the Council on Postsecondary Education to develop a coordinated and strategic approach. Equally important, we recognize the necessity of engaging our campus community—students, faculty, and staff—to foster open dialogue and gather valuable input on this matter.

The Rhode Island College Campus Police Department (RICPD) exemplifies excellence in public safety. It is accredited by both the Rhode Island Police Accreditation Commission (RIPAC) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)—the latter widely regarded as the gold standard in public safety accreditation. Notably, only about five percent of law enforcement agencies nationwide achieve CALEA accreditation. Rhode Island College is proud to have one of only twelve police departments in the state—and the only public institution of higher education in Rhode Island—to hold this distinction.



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Should the provisions outlined in House Bill 5666 be implemented, we estimate that full execution would take nearly two years and involve significant initial fiscal costs, along with additional annual operating expenses. Furthermore, we believe any implementation must be carefully phased, beginning with best practices such as integrating less-lethal force options.

Despite these challenges, Rhode Island College remains committed to enhancing campus safety and security. I am proud of the collaborative efforts of our community and the exceptional work of the RICPD in ensuring the well-being of our students, faculty, and staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. Should you or any members of the House Judiciary Committee have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack R. Warner
President
Rhode Island College

CC: Members of the House Judiciary Committee