



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET


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MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman, House Finance Committee
The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

From: Joseph Codega Jr., Budget Officer 

Date: April 8, 2024

Subject: Amendments to the FY 2025 Appropriations Act (24-H-7225)

Governor's Budget Amendment #7

The Governor requests article amendments be made under the FY 2025 Appropriations Act to Article 8 – Relating to Education. This amendment extends the Hope Scholarship pilot program at Rhode Island College (RIC) from five years to seven years.

The Rhode Island College Hope Scholarship is a pilot program that provides last-dollar tuition and fee payments to in-state students at RIC for their junior and senior years if they are in good standing and are on track to graduate or earn an approved certificate in a total of four years. Furthermore, adult students who have earned at least 60 credits within a four-year period at RIC are also eligible to receive a scholarship over a duration of not more than two years.

Under current law, the pilot program would sunset after five years, which means the Hope Scholarship would only be available for one more class of Rhode Island high school graduates, the class of 2024. Additional cohorts will allow for better evaluation of the Hope Scholarship's impact on enrollment and timely graduation at RIC, which in turn will be used to evaluate whether to make the program permanent.

If you have any questions regarding these amendments, please feel free to call me or my staff at 222-6300.

cc: Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Stephen Whitney, Senate Fiscal Advisor
Brian Daniels, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Jonathan Womer, Director of Administration

H 7225 RELATING TO MAKING APPROPRIATIONS IN SUPPORT OF FY 2025

Article 8 – Relating to Education

New SECTION 3. Page 208, after Line 27: Insert new Section 3 as follows and renumber all subsequent sections accordingly:

SECTION 3. Sections 16-113-7 and 16-113-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-113 entitled "Rhode Island Hope Scholarship Pilot Program Act" are hereby amended to read as follows:

16-113-7. Reporting and disbursement.

(a) On or before November 10, 2023, and on or before November 10 thereafter for every year through and including calendar year ~~2028~~ 2030, Rhode Island college shall submit a report to the director of the office of management and budget, the state budget officer, the house fiscal advisor, the senate fiscal advisor, the commissioner of postsecondary education, and the chair of the council on postsecondary education, detailing the following:

- (1) The number of students eligible to participate in the scholarship program;
- (2) The amount of federal and institutional financial aid anticipated to be received by recipient students;
- (3) The aggregate tuition and mandatory fee costs attributable to recipient students;
- (4) The resulting total cost of the scholarship program to the state;
- (5) The report shall contain such data for both the current fiscal year and the most up-to-date forecast for the following fiscal year. Data reported shall be subdivided by student-year cohort and shall be accompanied by a written explanation detailing the estimating methodology utilized and any impact(s) the forecasted data may present to institutional capacity, operational costs, and the tuition/fee revenue base of the institution.

(b) On or before July 1, 2024, and on or before July 1 thereafter for every year through and including calendar year ~~2028~~ 2030, Rhode Island college, in conjunction with the office of the postsecondary commissioner, shall submit a report evaluating the program to the governor, speaker of the house, and the president of the senate. This evaluation shall include the following:

- (1) The number of students who started in each cohort;
- (2) The number of students in each cohort who have attained a degree or certification in an on-time manner;
- (3) The number of students in each cohort who have not attained a degree or certification in an on-time manner and an analysis of why that has happened;
- (4) The number of students in each cohort who began the program but have been unable to continue or complete the program and an analysis of why that has happened;
- (5) The costs of the program and the costs of continuing the program;
- (6) Suggestions for ways to increase the success of the program;
- (7) Recommendations as to modifying, continuing, expanding, curtailing, or discontinuing the program; and
- (8) Any such other recommendations or information as Rhode Island college and the commissioner of postsecondary education deem appropriate to include in the evaluation.

(c) The office of management and budget, in consultation with the office of the postsecondary commissioner, shall oversee the apportionment and disbursement of all funds appropriated for the purpose of the scholarship program.

16-113-10. Funding of and sunset of pilot program.

The Rhode Island hope scholarship pilot program shall be funded from July 1, 2023, through and including July 1, ~~2028~~ 2030. There shall be no further funding of the pilot program without further action of the general assembly. Any final reports due pursuant to this chapter shall be filed pursuant to the dates set forth herein.