WHEREAS, Profound economic and technological changes are transforming the structure and nature of work, placing new and additional responsibilities on Rhode Island’s workforce training and educational systems; and

WHEREAS, The Senate's "Rhode to Work" report found there is a projected "middle skills" gap in Rhode Island along with a potential labor shortage in middle skill fields; and

WHEREAS, Such middle skilled occupations typically require some education and training beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, In response to the growing and evolving workforce needs of the state, the Community College of Rhode Island has expanded its workforce development programs, including the introduction of industry-recognized credentials; and

WHEREAS, Industry-recognized and endorsed credential and certification programs compose a model in workforce training that holds great potential for addressing the middle skills gap and concerns about career readiness; and

WHEREAS, Such industry-recognized credentialing programs provide the training necessary to acquire job-specific skills and abilities that employers are looking for, in comparatively less time than a two or four year college degree; and

WHEREAS, Credentials are often "stackable", allowing individuals to earn shorter-term credentials that have real value in the labor market; and then build on them to access more advanced training and employment opportunities; and
WHEREAS, To be most effective, these credentials must be trusted and endorsed by employers, and accessible by students; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby respectfully requests that the Community College of Rhode Island, in cooperation with the Governor’s Workforce Board, review and expand its offering of industry-recognized credentials by determining those credentials that would best meet the needs of the Rhode Island job market;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests the College to report back to the General Assembly by January 6, 2015, on the findings of this review, the extent to which the demand can be met using current resources, and the need, if any, for additional resources to meet this demand; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the Community College of Rhode Island and the Chair of the Governor's Workforce Board.