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**ARTICLE 3 AS AMENDED**

RELATING TO RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

CHAPTER 107

RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

**16-107-1. Short title.**

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode Island Promise Scholarship Act."

**16-107-2. Legislative findings and purpose.**

(a) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Education is critical for the state's young people to achieve their dreams and develop their talents;

(2) The state's economic success depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce; and

(3) The state's future prosperity depends upon its ability to make educational opportunities beyond high school available for all students as part of a free public education.

(b) In order to address the findings set forth in subsection (a), the purpose of this chapter is to increase the number of students enrolling in and completing degrees on-time from the Community College of Rhode Island.

**16-107-3. Establishment of scholarship program.**

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2017, it is hereby established the Rhode Island Promise scholarship program that will end with the high school graduating class of 2020. The general assembly shall annually appropriate the funds necessary to implement the purposes of this chapter. Additional funds beyond the scholarships may be appropriated to support and advance the Rhode Island Promise scholarship program. In addition to appropriation by the general assembly, charitable donations may be accepted into the scholarship program.

**16-107-4. Definitions.**

When used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) "FAFSA" means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form;

(2) "Mandatory fees and tuition" are the costs that every student is required to pay in order

1 to enroll in classes, and does not include room and board, textbooks, program fees that may exist  
2 in some majors, course fees that may exist for some specific courses, meal plans or travel;

3 (3) "On track to graduate on time" means the standards determined by the Community  
4 College of Rhode Island in establishing the expectation of a student to graduate with an associate's  
5 degree within two (2) years of enrollment (recognizing that some students, including students who  
6 require developmental education, are double majors, or are enrolled in certain professional  
7 programs may require an extended time period for degree completion);

8 (4) "Scholarship program" means the Rhode Island Promise scholarship program that is  
9 established pursuant to §16-107-3;

10 (5) "Recipient-student" means a student attending the Community College of Rhode Island  
11 who qualifies to receive the Rhode Island promise scholarship pursuant to §16-107-6; and

12 (6) "State" means the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

13 **16-107-5. Administration of scholarship program.**

14 (a) The financial aid office in conjunction with the office of enrollment management, or  
15 their respective equivalent offices, at the Community College of Rhode Island, shall administer the  
16 scholarship program for state residents seeking associate degrees who meet the eligibility  
17 requirements in this chapter.

18 (b) An award of the scholarship program shall cover the cost of two (2) years of tuition and  
19 mandatory fees less federal and all other financial aid monies available to the recipient-student.

20 (c) The scholarship program is limited to one award per student as required by §16-107-  
21 6(a)(7).

22 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

23 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at the Community College of Rhode Island in  
24 fall of 2017 and ending with students who enroll at the Community College of Rhode Island in the  
25 fall of 2020, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

26 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the Residency Policy adopted by  
27 the Council on Postsecondary Education, as amended, supplemented, restated or otherwise  
28 modified from time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must have satisfied the  
29 high school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching nineteen (19) years of age;  
30 provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a high  
31 school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the  
32 condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its  
33 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the Council on Elementary  
34 and Secondary Education;

1           (2) Must be admitted to, and must enroll and attend the Community College of Rhode  
2 Island on a full-time basis by the semester immediately following high school graduation or the  
3 semester immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma;

4           (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification by the deadline  
5 prescribed by the Community College of Rhode Island for each year in which the student seeks to  
6 receive funding under the scholarship program;

7           (4) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

8           (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or  
9 greater, as determined by the Community College of Rhode Island;

10          (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by the Community College of  
11 Rhode Island;

12          (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

13          (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

14          The Community College of Rhode Island shall develop a policy that will secure this commitment  
15 from recipient-students.

16          (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under §§16-107-6(a) ("specified  
17 conditions"):

18           (i) In the case of a recipient-student who has an approved medical or personal leave of  
19 absence or is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student's medical or  
20 personal circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship  
21 program upon resuming the student's education so long as the student continues to meet all other  
22 applicable eligibility requirements; and

23           (ii) In the case of a recipient-student who is a member of the national guard or a member  
24 of a reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more  
25 specified conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or  
26 will be participating in a deployment of the student's guard or reserve unit, the student may continue  
27 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student's basic or special  
28 military training or deployment.

29           **16-107-7. Reporting and disbursement.**

30           (a) On or before November 10 and May 10 of each fiscal year following fiscal year 2017,  
31 the Community College of Rhode Island shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of  
32 Management and Budget, the State Budget Officer, the House Fiscal Advisor, the Senate Fiscal  
33 Advisor, the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, and the chair of the Council on  
34 Postsecondary Education detailing the number of students eligible to participate in the scholarship

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

9 (b) On or before July 1, 2020, the Community College of Rhode Island and the  
10 Commissioner of Postsecondary Education shall submit a report evaluating the program based on  
11 the first two cohorts to the governor, speaker of the house, and the president of the senate. This  
12 evaluation shall include the following:

13 (1) The number of students who started in each cohort;

14 (2) The number of students in each cohort who have attained a degree or certification in an  
15 on-time manner;

16 (3) The number of students in each cohort who have not attained a degree or certification  
17 in an on-time manner; and an analysis of why that has happened;

18 (4) The number of students in each cohort who began the program but have been unable to  
19 continue or complete the program, and an analysis of why that has happened;

20 (5) The costs of the program and the costs of continuing the program;

21 (6) Suggestions for ways to increase the success of the program;

22 (7) Recommendations as to modifying, continuing, expanding, curtailing, or discontinuing  
23 the program; and

24 (8) Any such other recommendations or information as the Community College of Rhode  
25 Island and the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education deem appropriate to include in the  
26 evaluation.

27 (c) The Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Office of the  
28 Postsecondary Commissioner, shall oversee the apportionment and disbursement of all funds  
29 appropriated for the purpose of the scholarship program.

30 **16-107-8. Rules and procedures.**

31 The Council on Postsecondary Education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules to  
32 effectuate the purposes of this chapter and the Community College of Rhode Island shall establish  
33 appeal procedures for the award, denial or revocation of funding under the scholarship program.  
34 The rules shall be promulgated in accordance with §16-59-4.

1 SECTION 2. Section 16-59-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-59 entitled "Board of  
2 Governors for Higher Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education  
3 Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-59-9. Educational budget and appropriations.**

5 (a) The general assembly shall annually appropriate any sums it deems necessary for  
6 support and maintenance of higher education in the state and the state controller is authorized and  
7 directed to draw his or her orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of the appropriations  
8 or so much of the sums that are necessary for the purposes appropriated, upon the receipt by him  
9 or her of proper vouchers as the council on postsecondary education may by rule provide. The  
10 council shall receive, review, and adjust the budget for the office of postsecondary commissioner  
11 and present the budget as part of the budget for higher education under the requirements of § 35-3-  
12 4.

13 (b) The office of postsecondary commissioner and the institutions of public higher  
14 education shall establish working capital accounts.

15 (c) Any tuition or fee increase schedules in effect for the institutions of public higher  
16 education shall be received by the council on postsecondary education for allocation for the fiscal  
17 year for which state appropriations are made to the council by the general assembly; provided that  
18 no further increases may be made by the board of education or the council on postsecondary  
19 education for the year for which appropriations are made. Except that these provisions shall not  
20 apply to the revenues of housing, dining, and other auxiliary facilities at the University of Rhode  
21 Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community Colleges including student fees as described in  
22 P.L. 1962, ch. 257 pledged to secure indebtedness issued at any time pursuant to P.L. 1962, ch. 257  
23 as amended.

24 (d) All housing, dining, and other auxiliary facilities at all public institutions of higher  
25 learning shall be self-supporting and no funds shall be appropriated by the general assembly to pay  
26 operating expenses, including principal and interest on debt services, and overhead expenses for  
27 the facilities, [with the exception of the mandatory fees covered by the Rhode Island Promise](#)  
28 [Scholarship Program as established by §16-107-3](#). Any debt-service costs on general obligation  
29 bonds presented to the voters in November 2000 and November 2004 or appropriated funds from  
30 the Rhode Island capital plan for the housing auxiliaries at the University of Rhode Island and  
31 Rhode Island College shall not be subject to this self-supporting requirement in order to provide  
32 funds for the building construction and rehabilitation program. The institutions of public higher  
33 education will establish policies and procedures that enhance the opportunity for auxiliary facilities  
34 to be self-supporting, including that all faculty provide timely and accurate copies of booklist for

1 required textbooks to the public higher educational institution's bookstore.

2 (e) The additional costs to achieve self-supporting status shall be by the implementation of  
3 a fee schedule of all housing, dining, and other auxiliary facilities, including but not limited to,  
4 operating expenses, principal, and interest on debt services, and overhead expenses.

5 (f) The board of education is authorized to establish a restricted-receipt account for the  
6 Westerly Higher Education and Industry Center (also known as the Westerly Job Skills Center or  
7 Westerly Higher Education Learning Center) and to collect lease payments from occupying  
8 companies, and fees from room and service rentals, to support the operation and maintenance of  
9 the facility. All such revenues shall be deposited to the restricted-receipt account.

10 SECTION 3. This article shall take effect upon passage.