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# ARTICLE 3

## 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 16-107

#### 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 section (a), the purposes of this chapter are to increase:

(1) the number of students enrolled at the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island; and

(2) the number of students who complete their degree on time at these institutions.

##### **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. The general assembly shall annually appropriate the funds necessary into a restricted receipt account at each eligible postsecondary institution to implement the purposes of this chapter. 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:

(a) "Eligible postsecondary institution" means the University of Rhode Island, Rhode

1 Island College or the Community College of Rhode Island;

2 (b) “FAFSA” means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form;

3 (c) “Mandatory fees and tuition” are the costs that every student is required to pay in order  
4 to enroll in classes at the eligible postsecondary institutions, and does not include room and board,  
5 textbooks, meal plans or travel.

6 (d) “On track to graduate on time” means the standards determined by the applicable  
7 eligible postsecondary institution in establishing the expectation of a student to graduate with:

8 (1) an associate’s degree within 2 years of enrollment; and

9 (2) a bachelor’s degree within 4 years of enrollment;

10 (e) “Scholarship program” means the Rhode Island promise scholarship program that is  
11 established pursuant to § 16-107-3; and

12 (f) “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, or their respective  
15 equivalent offices, at the applicable eligible postsecondary institution, under the supervision of the  
16 Council on Postsecondary Education, shall administer the scholarship program for state residents  
17 seeking associate and bachelor degrees at eligible postsecondary institutions who meet the  
18 eligibility requirements in this chapter.

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

22 (c) The scholarship program limits one award per student.

23 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

24 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at an eligible postsecondary institution in the  
25 fall of 2017, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

26 (i) 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 19 years of age; *provided,*  
30 *further, that* in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a high school  
31 equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the condition by  
32 receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its municipalities as  
33 recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the Council on Elementary and Secondary  
34 Education;

1 (ii)(1) In the case of a recipient-student with regard to the Community College of Rhode  
2 Island, must be admitted to, and must enroll to, attend the institution on a full-time basis by the fall  
3 immediately following high school graduation or receipt of the high school equivalency diploma;  
4 or

5 (2) In the case of a recipient-student with regard to Rhode Island College or the University  
6 of Rhode Island, must be a currently enrolled full-time student who has declared a major and  
7 accumulated a minimum of 60 credit hours towards a bachelor's degree at the student's current  
8 institution;

9 (iii) Must complete the FAFSA by the deadline prescribed by the applicable eligible  
10 postsecondary institution for each academic year in which the student seeks to receive funding  
11 under the scholarship program;

12 (iv) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

13 (v) Must maintain a minimum of 2.0 grade point average at the applicable eligible  
14 postsecondary institution;

15 (vi) Must remain on track to graduate on time at the applicable eligible postsecondary  
16 institution; and

17 (vii) Must not have already received an award under the scholarship program.

18 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under §§ 16-107-6(a) ("specified  
19 conditions");

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

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

32 **16-107-7. Rules and procedures.**

33 The Council on Postsecondary Education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and  
34 establish appeal procedures for the award, denial or revocation of funding under the scholarship

1 [program, and to otherwise effectuate the purposes of this chapter. The rules shall be promulgated](#)  
2 [in accordance with § 16-59-4.](#)

3 SECTION 2. Section 16-59-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-59 entitled “Board of  
4 Governors for Higher Education” is hereby amended to read as follows:

5 **16-59-9. Education budget and appropriations.**

6 (a) The general assembly shall annually appropriate any sums it deems necessary for  
7 support and maintenance of higher education in the state and the state controller is authorized and  
8 directed to draw his or her orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of the appropriations  
9 or so much of the sums that are necessary for the purposes appropriated, upon the receipt by him  
10 or her of proper vouchers as the council on postsecondary education may by rule provide. The  
11 council shall receive, review, and adjust the budget for the office of postsecondary commissioner  
12 and present the budget as part of the budget for higher education under the requirements of § 35-3-  
13 4.

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

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

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

1 facilities to be self-supporting, including that all faculty provide timely and accurate copies of  
2 booklist for required textbooks to the public higher educational institution's bookstore.

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

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

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