

2024 -- H 7692

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LC005045  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$6,000,000 TO ONWARD WE LEARN IN RI

Introduced By: Representatives Messier, Giraldo, Diaz, Fellela, Baginski, Biah, Slater,  
and McNamara

Date Introduced: February 15, 2024

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, Prior legislative findings outlined in Chapter 70 of Title 16 define the need  
2 for Rhode Island to invest in college access and success programs that develop the educational,  
3 career, and technical skills of its students for its continued economic development, prosperity, and  
4 for maintaining and improving its quality of life; and

5 WHEREAS, The present and future workforce requires ever higher levels of educational  
6 and career and technical training in order to improve the economic prosperity of our State and  
7 nation; and the cost of higher education is a known barrier for all young people in Rhode Island to  
8 access higher education; and

9 WHEREAS, Onward We Learn's mission is to prepare young people in Rhode Island to  
10 become the first in their families to attend and complete college by participating in a  
11 comprehensive set of programs throughout middle school and high school that focus on academic  
12 enrichment, social and emotional development, career education, and postsecondary preparation;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Independent research completed over the past fifteen years confirms that  
15 students who participate in Onward We Learn are 40 percent more likely to graduate from high  
16 school on time and immediately enroll in college compared to their closely matched peers, and  
17 that students from Onward We Learn who enroll in postsecondary education are 20 percent more  
18 likely to earn a college degree compared to their closely matched peers; and

19 WHEREAS, Onward We Learn students not only receive comprehensive college access  
20 and success programming but also a scholarship for postsecondary education of up to \$4,500 per

1 year for four years which can be redeemed at any institution of higher education in Rhode Island;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Since its inception, Onward We Learn has provided more than \$50 million  
4 in scholarships to an estimated 12,500 young people in Rhode Island — increasing the likelihood  
5 of degree attainment, while reducing each student's overall higher education cost burden; and

6 WHEREAS, Onward We Learn will be submitting a new federal grant in June of 2024  
7 that will continue its programming services through 2031 and that demonstrating local resources  
8 to support the scholarship program will play an important role in helping to secure the grant; now,  
9 therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not  
11 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2024-2025, the sum of six million dollars (\$6,000,000)  
12 to Onward We Learn to support its scholarship program for low-income and first-generation  
13 students throughout Rhode Island for the next fifteen years; and the state controller is hereby  
14 authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for payment of said sum, or  
15 so much thereof as may be from time required, upon receipt of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$6,000,000 TO ONWARD WE LEARN IN RI

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- 1           This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$6,000,000 to Onward
- 2   We Learn in RI.

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