

**2026 -- H 7416**

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**S T A T E   O F   R H O D E   I S L A N D**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026**

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**A N   A C T**

**RELATING TO EDUCATION -- GUARANTEED ADMISSION FOR EAGLE SCOUT AND  
GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Introduced By: Representatives Spears, Kazarian, Stewart, Fogarty, Cotter, Speakman,  
McEntee, DeSimone, Read, and Shanley

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Legislative findings.

2           The general assembly finds and declares that:

3           (1) Earning the rank of Eagle Scout in Scouting America or the Girl Scouts of the USA  
4           Gold Award represents extraordinary achievement in leadership, community service, and personal  
5           development.

6           (2) These accomplishments align closely with the mission of Rhode Island's public  
7           institutions of higher education to foster civic engagement, scholarship, and community leadership.

8           (3) Providing guaranteed admission to recipients of these awards encourages public service  
9           among Rhode Island youth and strengthens connections between the state's public institutions of  
10           higher education and future student leaders.

11           SECTION 2. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by  
12           adding thereto the following chapter:

13           [CHAPTER 117](#)

14           [GUARANTEED ADMISSION FOR EAGLE SCOUT AND GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS](#)

15           **16-117-1. Guaranteed admission for Eagle Scout and Gold Award recipients.**

16           [\(a\) Automatic admission requirement - Public institutions of higher education.](#)

17           [Beginning with applications submitted for the Fall 2026 academic term and every term  
18           thereafter, each public institution of higher education in the State of Rhode Island, including the](#)

1    University of Rhode Island (URI), Rhode Island College (RIC), and the Community College of  
2    Rhode Island (CCRI), shall grant automatic admission to any applicant who:  
3       (1) Is a resident of the State of Rhode Island at the time of application; and  
4       (2) Has earned:  
5         (i) The rank of Eagle Scout from Scouting America; or  
6         (ii) The Gold Award from the Girl Scouts of the USA; and  
7         (3) Meets all minimum application submission requirements established by the institution,  
8         excluding competitive academic criteria or selective admission thresholds.

9         (b) Verification.

10      Applicants seeking admission under this section shall provide official documentation of  
11      the Eagle Scout rank or Gold Award to the admissions office of the applicable institution.

12      (c) Program-specific restrictions.

13      (1) Nothing in this chapter shall require an institution to admit an applicant into a  
14      specialized, capacity-limited, or accreditation-restricted program (including, but not limited to,  
15      nursing, engineering, pharmacy, or fine arts audition-based programs), unless the applicant meets  
16      all program-specific requirements.

17      (2) Applicants admitted under this section shall be permitted to enroll in the institution and  
18      may declare any major for which they meet the academic or program prerequisites.

19      (d) Non-discrimination. Admission granted pursuant to this chapter shall be offered  
20      without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation,  
21      national origin, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law.

22      **16-117-2. Rulemaking authority.**

23      The council on postsecondary education and each public institution of higher education  
24      may promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter,  
25      including procedures for documentation, deadlines, and admission notification.

26      **16-117-3. Construction.**

27      Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to:

28      (1) Guarantee financial aid, tuition waivers, or scholarships;  
29      (2) Alter residency requirements for in-state tuition; or  
30      (3) Prohibit institutions from adopting additional policies that expand access or create  
31      further pathways for admission.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- GUARANTEED ADMISSION FOR EAGLE SCOUT AND  
GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS

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- 1        This act would grant automatic admission to state public institutions of higher education to
- 2        any applicant who is a resident of the State of Rhode Island who has earned the rank of Eagle Scout
- 3        from Scouting America or the Gold Award from the Girl Scouts of the USA and meets all minimum
- 4        application submission requirements of the institution.
- 5        This act would take effect upon passage.

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