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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE ONWARD WE LEARN SCHOLARSHIP ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Messier, Alzate, Voas, Fellela, Shallcross Smith, Serpa,  
and Hull

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-70-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-70 entitled "The Onward  
2 We Learn Scholarship Act [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — the Rhode Island Board of Education Act]"  
3 is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-70-5. Budget and appropriations.**

5 The general assembly shall annually appropriate any sums as it deems necessary as the  
6 state's share for the support and maintenance of the onward we learn scholarship program,  
7 including operational and scholarship support, ~~and the~~. Should funds remain from the enacted  
8 budget in any fiscal year from the Rhode Island promise scholarship program after the community  
9 college of Rhode Island has satisfied all eligible scholarships associated with chapter 107 of title  
10 16 ("Rhode Island promise scholarship"), the office of the postsecondary commissioner is directed  
11 to reimburse onward we learn for any scholarships that onward we learn has paid on behalf of its  
12 students who have attended the community college of Rhode island in that respective fiscal year.  
13 In addition, should funds remain from the enacted budget in any fiscal year from the Rhode Island  
14 hope scholarship program after Rhode Island college has satisfied all eligible scholarships  
15 associated with chapter 113 of title 16 ("Rhode Island hope scholarship pilot program act"), the  
16 office of postsecondary commissioner is directed to reimburse onward we learn for any  
17 scholarships that onward we learn has paid on behalf of its students who have attended Rhode  
18 Island college in that respective fiscal year. The state controller is authorized and directed to draw  
19 their orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of the appropriations upon receipt by the

1 state controller of the proper voucher the office of the postsecondary commissioner may provide.  
2 The office of the postsecondary commissioner shall present the voucher to the state controller no  
3 later than the last day of the first month of the fiscal year for which the appropriation is made and  
4 this appropriation shall be remitted to the accounts of the onward we learn scholarship program by  
5 the state treasurer no later than the last day of the second month of the fiscal year.

6 SECTION 2. 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 -- THE ONWARD WE LEARN SCHOLARSHIP ACT

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1           This act would require any remaining funds in the enacted budget from the Rhode Island  
2   promise scholarship program or the Rhode Island hope scholarship program, after Rhode Island  
3   college has satisfied all eligible scholarships pursuant to those programs, to be reimbursed to  
4   onward we learn for any scholarships that onward we learn has paid on behalf of its students who  
5   have attended Rhode Island college in that fiscal year.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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