



kids

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**Testimony Re: H-7428 Regarding Postsecondary Education
Performance Funding
House Finance Committee
April 28, 2016
Stephanie Geller, Senior Policy Analyst**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice cautious support for House Bill 7428. This bill proposes to use performance funding as a policy lever to increase the number of students who successfully complete college.

A recent publication by Complete College America, titled *The Game Changers*, highlights the kinds of reforms needed to increase college completion. One of these recommended reforms is implementing performance funding for state higher education institutions. According to a July 2015 analysis by the National Conference of State Legislatures, performance funding is already being implemented in 32 states, and we think it is worth exploring here in Rhode Island.

We know that postsecondary education is increasingly critical in today's job market. By 2020, 71% of all jobs in Rhode Island will require some postsecondary training beyond high school. We also know that adults with more education are more likely to be employed and earn more than adults with lower levels of education. Between 2010 and 2014 in Rhode Island, adults with high school diplomas were almost three times more likely to be unemployed as those with bachelor's degrees or higher. And during that same period, the median annual income for adults with high school diplomas was \$30,757, compared to \$52,493 for adults with bachelor's degrees.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports this bill which we hope will help Rhode Island make progress in increasing the education levels of our residents and improving the economy of our state. **However, it is important that performance funding strategies ensure that Rhode Island works toward increasing college access and completion for *all students* and that it does not serve as a disincentive to serve low-income, minority, first generation, and adult learners who may need additional support to complete college.** For this reason, we would encourage the state to collect and report data on these key groups as well as on all students and to consider the outcomes of these groups when designing mechanisms for rewarding postsecondary education institutions for their performance.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown on this issue and for the opportunity to testify today.