



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent,

Rising costs across the country have put significant pressure on families and businesses in Rhode Island. Addressing these affordability challenges has been a central priority of my administration. That is why I launched Rhode Island's Affordability for All agenda, which focuses on lowering everyday costs for residents by eliminating the state tax on Social Security benefits, creating the state's first Child Tax Credit, and reducing utility bill charges.

However, Rhode Islanders also deserve direct relief from the costs imposed by federal tariffs that have increased prices for consumers and businesses. As I have long said, these tariffs raise costs for families and businesses, which is why I have consistently advocated against them. As you know, the United States Supreme Court recently found that many tariffs imposed during the Trump administration were unlawful.¹

Independent analyses confirm the significant cost these tariffs imposed on American households. Data from the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee estimates that the Trump Administration's tariff actions cost American consumers approximately \$1,745 per household between February 2025 and January 2026.² Similarly, research from the Yale Budget Lab estimates that tariffs increased costs for the average American household by approximately \$1,751 per year.³

¹ Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump, 607 U.S. ____ (2026).

² U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. *Updated Data: American Families Have Already Paid More Than \$1,700 Each in Tariff Costs Since Trump Entered Office*. February 26, 2026.
<https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2026/2/updated-data-american-families-have-already-paid-more-than-1-700-each-in-tariff-costs-since-trump-entered-office>

³ The Budget Lab at Yale. *State of U.S. Tariffs: January 19, 2026*. January 19, 2026.
<https://budgetlab.yale.edu/research/state-us-tariffs-january-19-2026>

With more than 440,000 households in Rhode Island, these estimates translate to **over \$770 million in costs borne by Rhode Island families and businesses.**

Tariffs function as a tax on consumers and businesses. For many Rhode Island families, \$1,751 would make a meaningful difference by helping offset the cost of groceries, rent, and other essential household expenses. Now that the courts have determined these tariffs were unlawful, the money taken from families and businesses should be returned.

I urge the Department of the Treasury to ensure that tariff payments collected under these unlawful policies are refunded to the American people. Rhode Island families, small businesses, and manufacturers deserve to have these funds returned so that more of their hard-earned money can remain in their pockets and support our local economy.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

Daniel J. McKee
Governor