

State of Rhode Island

JOURNAL

-OF THE-

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY SESSION of the General Assembly begun and held at the State House in the City of Providence on Tuesday, the Seventh Day of January in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.

Volume 153, No. 31

Thursday, May 7, 2026

Thirty-First Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence on Thursday, May 7, 2026, and is called to order at 4:04 o'clock P.M. by the Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker.

The roll is called, and a quorum is declared present with 75 members present and 0 members absent as follows:

PRESENT – 75: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fascia, Felix, Fellela, Finkelman, Fogarty, Furtado, Giraldo, Handy, Hopkins, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Paplauskas, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Read, Roberts, Sanchez, Santucci, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, and Voas.

ABSENT – 0: Representatives

INVOCATION

The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi presents Representative Deborah A. Fellela, who delivers the Invocation and leads the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(For Invocation, see Appendix, this Journal.)

APPROVAL OF RECORD

By unanimous consent, the House Journal of Tuesday, May 5, 2026, is approved.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SPEAKER

REPRESENTATIVE
K. JOSEPH SHEKARCHI
Speaker of the House
Room 323 State House
Providence, Rhode Island, 02903
401-222-2447

State of Rhode Island



House of Representatives

May 7, 2026

Francis P. McCabe, Clerk of the House
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mr. McCabe:

I hereby resign the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives effective immediately. It has been the honor of my lifetime to serve this esteemed institution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Joseph Shekarchi'.

K. Joseph Shekarchi
Speaker of the House of Representatives

cc: The Honorable Gregg M. Amore, Rhode Island Secretary of State

(For the Honorable Speaker Shekarchi's remarks, see the Appendix of this Journal.)

Read and placed on file.

NOW PRESIDING

At 4:21 o'clock P.M., the Honorable Speaker Shekarchi yields the rostrum to the Honorable Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy.

COMMUNICATIONS

May 7, 2026

Dear Francis McCabe, House Clerk:

The Democratic Caucus met today and endorsed Rep. Christopher Blazejewski as Speaker of the House and elected Rep. Katherine Kazarian as House Majority Leader.

Sincerely,

Representative Grace Diaz, Democratic Caucus Chair

Read and placed on file.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

ELECTION OF SPEAKER FOR REMAINDER OF 2026 SESSION

Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy calls for nominations.

Representative Carson offers a few remarks and nominates Majority Leader Christopher R. Blazejewski, of District 2 in Providence, to be Speaker of the House of Representatives. The nomination is seconded by Representatives Azzinaro, Abney, Donovan, Spears, Cotter, Carson, Biah, Boylan, Speakman, McGaw, DeSimone, Read, Marszalkowski, McEntee, Morales, Caldwell, Craven, O'Brien, Dawson, Finkelman, Noret, Perez, Phillips, Shanley, Costantino, Lima, Serpa, Fellela, Cortvriend, Knight, Handy, Fogarty, Ajello, Shallcross Smith, Hull, Lombardi, Tanzi, Felix, McNamara, Ackerman, Kislak, Corvese, Slater, Diaz, Bennett, Edwards, Casey, Solomon, Casimiro, Kazarian, Alzate, Stewart, Voas, Giraldo, Potter, Cruz, Brien, Baginski, Messier, Furtado, Sanchez, and . Shekarchi.

Minority Whip Place offers a few remarks and nominates Minority Leader Michael W. Chippendale, of District 40 in Foster, Gloucester, Coventry, to be Speaker of the House of Representatives. The nomination is seconded by Representatives Newberry, Paplauskas, Quattrocchi, Santucci, Hopkins, Nardone, Roberts, and Fascia.

Majority Leader Kazarian, seconded by Representative Caldwell, moves that nominations be closed.

The motion to close nominations prevails on a voice vote.

The election of Representative Christopher R. Blazewski as Speaker of the House prevails on a roll call vote, 65 members voting for Representative Blazewski and 10 voting for Representative Chippendale.

Blazewski— 65: Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Finkelman, Fogarty, Furtado, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Read, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Shekarchi, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, and Voas.

Chippendale-10: Representatives Chippendale, Fascia, Hopkins, Nardone, Newberry, Paplauskas, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Roberts, and Santucci.

The Chair declares Christopher R. Blazewski is elected Speaker of the House for the remainder of the 2026 Session.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

OATH OF OFFICE

The House attends while the Honorable Gregg Amore, Secretary of State, administers the Oath of Office to the Honorable Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy invites Aimi Gada, the wife of the Speaker-elect, and the Speaker-elect's two children, Aria and Liam, to join him on the rostrum to hold the family Bible.

NOW PRESIDING

At 4:45 o'clock P.M., the Honorable Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy yields the rostrum to the Honorable Speaker Blazewski.

The Honorable Speaker Christopher R. Blazewski addresses the members of the House of Representatives.

(For the Honorable Speaker Blazewski's remarks, see Appendix of this Journal.)

Speaker Blazewski warmly welcomes Senate President Valerie Lawson, Senate Majority Leader Frank Ciccone, Senate Majority Whip David Tikoian, and Chief of Staff John Fleming to the House Chamber.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Majority Leader Kazarian expresses gratitude to former Speaker Shekarchi for being a great leader, extends congratulations to Speaker Blazejewski, and looks forward to working with him.

GUESTS

Majority Leader Kazarian warmly welcomes her husband, Sam Daniel; her twin daughters, Serena and Eleanor; her parents, Michele and Kenneth; and former Senate President William Irons to the House Chamber.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

CALENDAR

Majority Leader Kazarian moves today's Calendar to next Tuesday, May 12, 2026. There are no objects.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minority Leader Chippendale offers some remarks congratulating Speaker Blazejewski and looks forward to working with him.

Representative Cortvriend announces the birth of her new grandson, Ridge Ellsworth Cavacas. Speaker Blazejewski congratulates Representative Cortvriend on her addition to the family.

Representatives Kislak, Slater, Casey, Handy, and Chairwoman Diaz warmly congratulate Speaker Blazejewski and Majority Leader Kazarian on their new leadership roles. They are excited about the opportunities to work with them. Additionally, they sincerely thank former Speaker Shekarchi for his dedicated leadership and service to the State of Rhode Island.

Vice Chairwoman Kislak announces that the Committee on Education will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 135 of the State House.

Vice-Chairman Slater announces that the Committee on Finance will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 35 of the State House.

Chairman Casey announces that the Committee on Municipal Government & Housing will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 101 of the State House.

Representative Handy wishes his mother and all mothers a Happy Mother's Day this weekend.

GUESTS

Speaker Blazejewski recognizes and welcomes Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos to the House Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairwoman Diaz thanks everyone who attended Child Care Awareness Day for making it a success.

Majority Leader Kazarian announces the next House Session will be held on Tuesday, May 12, at 4:00 p.m.

Majority Leader Kazarian wishes Chairwoman McEntee a happy birthday!

RULE 7D

The following bills were received pursuant to Rule 7D:

Representative Ackerman-An Act relating to Alzheimer's

TRANSMITTAL

By unanimous consent, all matters on the clerk's desk are ordered to be transmitted to His Excellency, the Governor, to the Honorable Senate and the Honorable Secretary of State forthwith.

(For Transmittals to Governor, see Appendix of this Journal.)

DESK HELD OPEN

The Honorable Speaker Blazejewski announces that the desk will be held open.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Honorable Senate transmits with announcement of passage, of the following measures:

Senate Bill No. 2042

BY Rogers, de la Cruz, Raptakis, Paolino, Ciccone, Burke, McKenney, Tikoian
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- SIDEWALKS (Requires that all maintenance of sidewalks along state highways, with the exception of snow and ice removal, be the responsibility of the state.) {LC3276/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Finance

Senate Bill No. 2126

BY DiMario, Lawson, Valverde, Murray, Zurier, Lauria, Acosta, Vargas, Quezada
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- THE RHODE ISLAND WORKS PROGRAM (Removes the requirement that families consent to, and cooperate with the department of human services in establishing paternity and enforcing child and medical support orders as a condition of eligibility for child care assistance.) {LC3643/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Finance

Senate Bill No. 2177

BY Felag, Appollonio, Lauria, Gallo, Burke, LaMountain, Britto
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- DECORATIONS (Establishes the Rhode Island orange heart medal to formally recognize Rhode Island veterans whose service exposed them to toxic herbicides, burn pits, or other hazardous agents.) {LC4232/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Veterans Affairs

Senate Bill No. 2208

BY Bell, Mack, Ciccone, Quezada, Bissaillon, Kallman, Famiglietti, Zurier
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COOPERATIVE SERVICE AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS (Amends the composition of the urban collaborative in Providence and provides that it is governed by a board of trustees.) {LC4445/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Education

Senate Bill No. 2212 SUB A

BY Acosta, Mack, Bissaillon, Valverde, Zurier, DiPalma, Gallo, McKenney
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS (Extends teacher certifications without fee or penalty for three (3) or five (5) years for teachers who hold certifications as of July 1, 2026.) {LC3820/A/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Education

Senate Bill No. 2264

BY Mack, Bissaillon, Kallman, Quezada, Gu
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (Provides for warming center and cooling center alerts to trigger certain procedures municipalities shall follow during extreme heat or cold to help at-risk individuals with resources including, but not limited to, warming and cooling centers.) {LC3430/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2318

BY Acosta, Vargas, Ciccone, Burke, Quezada, Thompson, Pearson, Mack, Kallman
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CORPORATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS -- WORKERS' COOPERATIVES (Clarifies the role of a corporation electing to be governed as a workers' cooperative to allow it to operate as a hiring hall under certain circumstances.) {LC3804/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Corporations

Senate Bill No. 2627 SUB A

BY LaMountain, Felag, Burke, Gallo, Tikoian, Ciccone, Britto, Raptakis, Bissaillon, Murray
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- TEMPORARY
EXTENDED SERVICE HOURS (Allows, but not require, local licensing authorities to grant
temporary periods for extended indoor service hours under existing liquor licenses for certain 2026
FIFA World Cup Tournament matches.) {LC5018/A/2}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2756

BY Felag, Burke, Tikoian, Raptakis, Appollonio, Euer, Britto, Bissaillon, Ciccone, Morgan
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- MILITARY
CHILD ACT (Defines "military-connected student" and permits military-connected students to enroll
by remote registration upon presentation of military orders confirming the parent or guardian be
stationed in this state during the current or following school year.) {LC5878/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Veterans Affairs

Senate Bill No. 2922

(Lietenant Governor)

BY Ciccone, DiPalma

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE RHODE
ISLAND CENTER FOR EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP (Establishes the Rhode Island center for
employee ownership to facilitate businesses in transitioning to an employee-owned business model.)
{LC4777/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Committee on Small Business

Senate Bill No. 2996

(National Guard)

BY Felag, Raptakis, Burke, Tikoian, DiPalma, LaMountain, Gallo, Ciccone

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE --
DECORATIONS (Creates three (3) new awards for Rhode Island National Guard members and
would provide eligibility for the Rhode Island star for certain civilian government employees and
military and civilian leaders of foreign governments.) {LC5436/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Veterans Affairs

Senate Bill No. 3073 as amended

BY Britto, McKenney

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- MORTGAGES OF REAL PROPERTY
(Limits mortgage prepayment rules to mortgages on owner-occupied properties with one to four
dwelling units.) {LC5273/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Judiciary

Senate Bill No. 3184 SUB A

BY Ciccone, Burke, Famiglietti, Raptakis, Tikoian

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- NURSES (Details
each of those limited emergency circumstances where a registered nurse and advanced practice
registered nurses, may safely administer anesthesia such as critical life-saving or emergency
situations where there is imminent threat to life or limb.) {LC6266/A/1}
05/08/2026 Referred to House Health & Human Services

Senate Bill No. 3185**BY** de la Cruz**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- DAM MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS (Exempts property that consists of the lake bed and Wilson's Reservoir in the town of Burrillville from taxes.) {LC6271/1}

05/08/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 3186**BY** Euer**ENTITLED**, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF JAMESTOWN TO FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS AND TO ISSUE NOT MORE THAN \$3,000,000 BONDS AND NOTES THEREFOR (Proposes a bond measure to authorize the Town of Jamestown to issue up to three million dollars (\$3,000,000) in general obligation bonds, subject to voter approval, to support affordable housing projects in Jamestown.) {LC6261/1}

05/08/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 3214**BY** Acosta, Lawson, Gallo, DiPalma, Ciccone, McKenney, Mack, Valverde**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS (Establishes stabilization fund for Central Falls and for Davies and Met schools for student education funding.) {LC6319/1}

05/08/2026 Referred to House Finance

Senate Bill No. 3266**BY** Felag**ENTITLED**, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF CHARLIE'S OIL CO., INC. {LC6353/1}

05/08/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

NEW BUSINESS**House Bill No. 8531****BY** O'Brien, Dawson, Shanley, Noret, Serpa, Fellela, Azzinaro, Kennedy, Corvese, Solomon**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE (Authorizes school committees to deny or defer approval of a homeschooling proposed plan in certain circumstances.) {LC6240/1}

05/08/2026 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 8532**BY** Nardone, Roberts, Chippendale, Noret, Serpa**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (Requires 10% of all rental fees collected by the water resources board pursuant to a lease with the Coventry Pines Golf Club be paid to the town of Coventry and 10% to the Central Coventry Fire District.) {LC6450/1}

05/08/2026 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Resolution No. 8533**BY** Morales

ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$320,000 FOR BETTER LIVES RHODE ISLAND (Appropriates \$320,000 to Better Lives Rhode Island in support of the transitional housing program for women leaving incarceration.) {LC6444/1}
05/08/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Resolution No. 8534**BY** Morales

ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$850,000 FOR NEW BRIDGES FOR HAITIAN SUCCESS (Authorizes the appropriation of \$850,000 for New Bridges for Haitian Success for the purpose of residential property acquisition for transitional housing to support immigrants with TPS and asylum status, for the fiscal year ending 6/30/2027.) {LC6443/1}
05/08/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

COMMITTEE ON CORPORATIONS

Chairman Solomon, for the Committee on Corporations, reports back the following measure, with recommendation of passage:

House Bill No. 7613 SUB A

(Dept. of Revenue)

BY Marszalkowski

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- TAX PREPARERS ACT OF 2013 (Provides penalties for tax preparers that purposefully mislead their clients or act as ghost preparers of tax returns and requires the tax administrator publish a list of tax preparers who have had their privileges to prepare returns revoked or suspended.) {LC4981/A/3}
05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Chairman Craven, for the Committee on Judiciary, reports back the following measure, with recommendation of passage:

House Bill No. 8004 SUB A**BY** Craven

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--COURTS -- SUPERIOR COURT (Provides technical amendments relating to comprehensive planning and land use, subdivision of land, zoning ordinances and low- and moderate-income housing.) {LC5900/A/2}
05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

Chairman Casey, for the Committee on Municipal Government and Housing, reports back the following measure, with recommendation of passage:

House Bill No. 7491

(Providence)

BY Kislak, Lombardi, Hull, Slater, DeSimone, Ajello, Sanchez, Lima, Perez, Diaz

ENTITLED, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE TO ISSUE NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES TO FUND THE PROVIDENCE HOUSING TRUST FUND TO FINANCE AFFORDABLE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS IN THE CITY (Authorizes the city of Providence to issue not more than \$25,000,000 in general obligation bonds and notes to fund the providence housing trust fund to finance affordable multi-family housing projects in the city.) {LC4701/1}

05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

House Bill No. 8403

BY Finkelman

ENTITLED, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF JAMESTOWN TO FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS AND TO ISSUE NOT MORE THAN \$3,000,000 BONDS AND NOTES THEREFOR (Proposes a bond measure to authorize the Town of Jamestown to issue up to three million dollars (\$3,000,000) in general obligation bonds, subject to voter approval, to support affordable housing projects in Jamestown.) {LC6260/1}

05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

House Bill No. 8466

BY Corvese, O'Brien

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- RETAIL LICENSES (Allows for the issuance of a Class BV license for the property located at 1706 Mineral Spring Avenue in the town of North Providence.) {LC6361/1}

05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

Senate Bill No. 2755

BY Zurier

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- RETAIL LICENSES (Allows for the issuance of a Class B or Class BV liquor license for the property located at 186 Wayland Avenue in the city of Providence.) {LC5290/1}

05/12/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Chairman Azzinaro, for the Committee on Veterans Affairs, reports back the following measure, with recommendation of passage:

House Bill No. 7679 SUB A

BY Azzinaro, Corvese, Casey, Kennedy

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- BURIAL OF VETERANS (Provides that certain Hmong or Lao individuals who served honorably in military

operations in support of the United States as special guerrilla units be granted burial rights at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery.) {LC4890/A/1}
05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

House Resolution No. 8487

BY Azzinaro, Kennedy, Fellela, Serpa, Read, Abney, Noret

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE CAMP LEJEUNE JUSTICE ACT OF 2022 {LC6358/1}

05/10/2026 Placed on House Calendar (05/14/2026)

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:02 o'clock P.M., on motion of Majority Leader Kazarian, seconded by Minority Leader Chippendale, the House adjourns, on a unanimous voice vote.

Diane M. DePina
Recording Clerk

APPENDIX

INVOCATION

REPRESENTATIVE DEBORAH A. FELLELA

Dear God, we ask for your blessing as we embark on a new chapter in the House of Representatives. We pray that you grant our elected leaders knowledge, wisdom, patience, and compassion in their deliberations. Let us always be mindful that this noble experiment called democracy relies on honest discourse to best serve the needs of all who call Rhode Island home. Amen

APPENDIX

REMARKS OF

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER K. JOSEPH SHEKARCHI

May 7, 2026

This is a very bittersweet moment for me. After a great deal of reflection, I have decided to humbly pursue a different path of public service and apply for the opening on the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

I believe it is best to step away from leadership and my role as Speaker, effective today, although I will finish the term my constituents have elected me to serve. I will relinquish the gavel after I complete these remarks and leave it to the wisdom of this body to elect my successor.

It has been deeply gratifying to serve as Speaker since January 5, 2021, and I am truly grateful for your confidence and collaboration since then.

I fondly recall that first day – taking the oath of office and delivering remarks while we wore masks and were protected by plexiglass in Veterans Auditorium. We all spread safely apart to adapt to the reality of the COVID pandemic.

Despite those unprecedented challenges, we adapted. We met regularly at the Vets and we accomplished a great deal together. In fact, I think we came through the pandemic stronger. It has been the honor of a lifetime to have earned the trust and respect of my colleagues for three terms. One of my goals as Speaker was to change the culture of the House into a more positive, member-driven body where all perspectives are heard, respected and valued. I am incredibly proud that we have done just that. Collaboration and compromise have been the guiding principles in our decision-making.

I am especially proud that all of the budgets we've enacted have enjoyed bipartisan support. These budgets have induced smart and creative ideas suggested from members on both sides of the aisle, as well as from our diverse communities and perspectives.

I often say that the budget is our ultimate policy statement. In my five-plus years as Speaker, together we have passed six budgets that have made significant investments in education, bolstered our healthcare and Medicaid systems, passed a groundbreaking law regarding wage theft and misclassification, we expanded our economy, and we implemented environmental protections.

I especially want to thank my colleagues for supporting my passion for housing. All positive outcomes in life begin with a safe, stable place to live, and that is why I made housing issues my focus as Speaker. You have all worked in tandem with me to pass more than 60 new laws that reduce red tape and increase housing production. Our work is yielding real results: data recently released shows that housing production has increased by 150% over the last five years. We have also created compassionate opportunities for those previously unhoused. I pass the torch to Chairwoman **June Speakman**, who is up to the task.

With the help of you, my colleagues, we also have made major advancements in healthcare by investing heavily in our hospitals and nursing homes, increasing Medicaid rates for primary care providers, and lowering prescription drug prices.

I fondly recall one issue that stands out. I spent the entire Father's Day in 2021 working with **Rep. Susan Donovan** to negotiate the passage of landmark pay equity legislation.

We have steadily increased funding every year for our public schools, advanced opportunities for free in-state tuition at both CCRI and RIC and made unprecedented investments at URI.

We have created a Rhode Island hub for the life science sector, which has enormous growth potential. We have passed legislation to keep some of our largest employers here in Rhode Island, and we eliminated the tangible tax for most small businesses. These measures have significantly enhanced economic development.

I could go on and on with more achievements, but I leave others to judge the record. And with the talent in this room, I know the future is limitless.

It is a very difficult decision to step aside, but I assure you that following today's election, this chamber will not skip a beat. I am aware that the Democratic Caucus moments ago put its faith and conviction behind Majority Leader Chris Blazewski to succeed me.

I want to thank Chris for standing beside me every day as my trusted and steady partner in leadership. He will do a tremendous job, as will his leadership team.

CHRIS IS READY! He has been part of every decision that has been made since I have been Speaker. He has been an outstanding Leader, and he will be a tremendous Speaker.

In closing, I want to thank my neighbors of District 23 in Warwick, our own Leadership Team and all the committee chairs, and my dedicated staff – especially Ray Simone and of course Nicole McCarty -- for the years of trust and collaboration as we worked hard together every day on a simple premise: to get good things done for the people of Rhode Island.

Whatever the next chapter brings, my goal of service to the people of this great state will always remain.

Also, I want to acknowledge family and friends who are here with me today and have been by my side through all of life's journeys: Kevin Murphy, Mary Shekarchi, Kathleen Cesaretti, Donna Bentfield and John Cooney.

I thank you all for your support and friendship.

Clerk, I have a communication.

Again, it has been the honor of my life to have served as Speaker of the House in this glorious chamber.

At this time, I turn the gavel over to Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Kennedy to conduct the election of Speaker.

APPENDIX

REMARKS OF

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER CHRISTOPHER R. BLAZEJEWSKI

May7, 2026

I'd like to start by thanking all of you, my House colleagues.

I'm so grateful for your confidence and your support.

We have real work ahead – difficult work, with no easy answers.

But the people who sent us here deserve nothing less than our full commitment – to our state, to this institution, and to one another.

There will be tough days ahead, no question, but this room has never lacked for resilience – never lacked for good people willing to roll up their sleeves and get to work.

My commitment to each of you is simple – to listen, to be fair, to have an open door and an open mind, and to make sure every voice in this chamber is heard.

We have a lot of work ahead – to get it done, each of us is going to need all the help we can get.

If you don't mind, I'd like to do some introductions.

First, thank you to my parents, Richard and Diane, who are here with us today.

When we started out in North Smithfield, my **Dad** worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, including at a grocery store in Woonsocket and on a loading dock as a Teamster.

When we moved to Cumberland, he got a job at a lumber yard in South County and worked there until he retired a few years back.

Dad, thank you for all you did to instill in me the value of hard work and commitment.

And, of course, thank you, **Mom**.

My mom Diane stayed home and raised my siblings and me when we were young – reading books and taking us to school, to the library, to sports, and all along teaching us to love animals.

As we got older, she started working in retail in Attleboro, where she still works to this day.

Mom, thank you for always keeping us focused on the importance of education, and for always being a fierce advocate for us along the way.

And thank you to my sister **Jill** for being here today.

Auntie Jill – as she is known to Aria and Liam – works in tech and is a devoted mom to her son Nathan, who she raises on Jamestown with her partner Nick. Thank you for being here Jill.

And a big thank you to my wife **Ami Gada**.

Ami is a North Providence valedictorian, a Johnston history teacher, a tremendous long-distance runner, and a wonderful mom.

Ami and I are so proud to raise our family in Fox Point, where we've lived for the last twenty-one years.

We're so grateful for our neighbors in Providence and for the community we're so fortunate to be a part of.

Ami, thank you for always being there for the kids and for me, we love you so much!

And thank you **Aria and Liam** - Mama and I are so proud of you, and I'm so happy you're here today.

You are both phenomenal students and dancers and athletes, and just all-around great kids.

Not everyone knows this, but in late December, when no one is here in the House chamber, Aria and Liam like to come up to the State House, make their way to this rostrum, bang the gavel, shout into the microphones, and make an awful lot of noise.

With all the banging and shouting and total ruckus, I have to say, it really just sounds like a normal day of session.

Congratulations and thank you to **Leader Kazarian**.

Can we all just take a moment to give a big round of applause to the first women in the history of Rhode Island to serve as House Majority Leader?

I have a feeling, Katie, that this is NOT the last of your firsts.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to Katie's husband **Sam** and baby daughters **Eleanor and Serena**. In February, Katie and Sam welcomed twin girls into the world, and now they are making their first appearance here today at the State House.

Katie, you're going to do a great job as leader.

Thank you to **Representative Carson** and **Chairman Azzinaro** for your nominating speeches, and to **Chairman Bennett** and **Chairwoman Alzate** for your speeches in the caucus.

Lauren, Sammy, Dave, Karen – I deeply appreciate and am honored by your kind words and steadfast support all along the way.

And I would be remiss if I did not thank my chief legal counsel, Danica Iacoi, and my executive assistant, **Jennifer Amerantes** - our team is small but mighty.

And last but certainly not least, I want to thank the man of the hour, **Speaker Joe Shekarchi**.

Joe, six years ago, you stepped into the role of Speaker and quickly changed the culture of this chamber – opening the doors wider, bringing more voices in, and reminding all of us that good government and good policy is built on respect and collaboration.

The standard you set – of fairness, of accessibility, of accountability to the people of this state – is the foundation we are all standing on today.

Rhode Island is better for your leadership, and so are we.

Thank you for your partnership, your guidance, and most of all, your friendship. You are going to make a great Supreme Court Justice.

Please, ladies and gentlemen, one more round of applause for OUR Speaker, Speaker Joe Shekarchi.

To every single one of you in this room, thank you for the trust you've placed in our leadership team over the years.

It is a privilege I've never taken lightly, and one I intend to cherish and honor as we move forward together.

And with that, let's get to work.

Congratulations and thank you to **Leader Kazarian**.

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And with that, let's get to work.

We'll now go to Leader Kazarian.

APPENDIX**CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026:****1. 2026-H 7369****BY Felix****ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND INSTALLATION OF SYSTEMS**

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

2. 2026-H 7608**BY Dawson****ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- OPERATION OF RAILROADS GENERALLY**

Committee on Corporations recommends passage.

3. 2026-H 7477 SUB A**BY Voas****ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CORPORATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS -- UNIFORM PARTNERSHIP ACT -- THE RHODE ISLAND LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY ACT**

Committee on Corporations recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

4. 2026-H 7836**BY Giraldo****ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- BARBERS, HAIRDRESSERS, COSMETICIANS, MANICURISTS, AND ESTHETICIANS**

Committee on Corporations recommends passage.

5. 2026-H 7859 SUB A**BY Kennedy****ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- DOMESTIC INSURANCE COMPANIES**

Committee on Corporations recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

6. **2026-H 7551**
BY Kennedy
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- FRAUD AND FALSE DEALING

Committee on Judiciary recommends passage.

7. **2026-H 7092**
BY Perez
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- PRIMARIES FOR ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND FOR PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.

8. **2026-H 7782**
BY Boylan
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CONDUCT OF ELECTION AND VOTING EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.

9. **2026-H 7677**
BY Spears
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.

10. **2026-H 7079 SUB A**
BY Craven
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL PROCEDURE -- EXPUNGEMENT OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

Committee on Judiciary recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

11. 2026-S 3204**BY** Pearson**ENTITLED**, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE CUMBERLAND LODGE #14, FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

Committee on Corporations recommends passage in concurrence.

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026:**1. 2026-H 7613 SUB A****BY** Marszalkowski**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- TAX PREPARERS ACT OF 2013

Committee on Corporations recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

2. 2026-H 8004 SUB A**BY** Craven**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--COURTS -- SUPERIOR COURT

Committee on Judiciary recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

3. 2026-H 7679 SUB A**BY** Azzinaro**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- BURIAL OF VETERANS

Committee on Veterans` Affairs recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

4. 2026-H 7491**BY** Kislak**ENTITLED**, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE TO ISSUE NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES TO FUND THE PROVIDENCE HOUSING TRUST FUND TO FINANCE AFFORDABLE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS IN THE CITY

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

5. 2026-H 8487**BY** Azzinaro**ENTITLED**, HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE CAMP LEJEUNE JUSTICE ACT OF 2022

Committee on Veterans` Affairs recommends passage.

6. **2026-H 8403**
BY Finkelman
ENTITLED, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF JAMESTOWN TO FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS AND TO ISSUE NOT MORE THAN \$3,000,000 BONDS AND NOTES THEREFOR

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

7. **2026-H 8466**
BY Corvese
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- RETAIL LICENSES

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

8. **2026-S 2755**
BY Zurier
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- RETAIL LICENSES

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage in concurrence.

Francis McCabe
Clerk of the House

Sunday, May 10, 2026
Updated: Tuesday, May 12, 2026