

State of Rhode Island

Journal of the Senate

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-Five.

Volume 152, No. 19

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

Nineteenth Legislative Day

CALL TO ORDER

The Senate meets pursuant to adjournment and is called to order by The Honorable Hanna M. Gallo, Senate President Pro Tempore, on at 5:04 o'clock P.M.

ROLL CALL

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 37 Senators present and 0 Senators absent as follows:

PRESENT –37: Senators Acosta, Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, de la Cruz, DiMario, Dimitri, DiPalma, Euer, Felag, Gallo, Gu, Kallman, LaMountain, Lauria, Lawson, Mack, McKenney, Morgan, Murray, Paolino, Patalano, Pearson, Quezada, Raptakis, Rogers, Sosnowski, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, Valverde, Vargas and Zurier.

ABSENT – 0:

INVOCATION

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore, by unanimous consent, presents Senator LaMountain to deliver the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore, by unanimous consent, presents Senator LaMountain, to lead the Senate in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF RECORD

The Senate Journal of the Eighteenth Legislative Day of the 2025 proceedings is read in part.

Upon suggestion of Senator LaMountain and by unanimous consent, further reading of the Journal is dispensed with and the Journal approved as recorded.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TRANSFER OF BILLS**

Senator Murray, In accordance with Senate Rule 6.14, moves to transfer the following bill from the Committee on Health and Human Services to the Committee to on Finance.

Senate Bill No. 697

BY Murray, Thompson, Kallman, Quezada, Valverde, Lauria, Mack, Euer

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (Mandates that EOHHS assemble a network of equity zones where local multisector groups of nonprofits, service providers, advocates, community members, state agencies, and municipalities can address social factors of health at a local level.) {LC1867/1}

Transferred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Resolution No. 992**

BY McKenney

ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MAY OF 2025 TO BE “MYOSITIS AWARENESS MONTH IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND” {LC2182/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

Senate Resolution No. 993

BY Sosnowski

ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MAY OF 2025 AS “RHODE ISLAND NATIVE PLANT MONTH” {LC2575/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

Senate Resolution No. 994**BY** Murray**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING MAY OF 2025, AS
"NATIONAL SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE
ISLAND

{LC2789/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVESA message from the House of Representatives transmits with announcement of passage, of the
following measure:**House Bill No. 6113****BY** Cortvriend**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGES (Allows Nunzio
Pontillo to join Andrew Peter Carson and Christos Nelson Anastasopoulos in marriage on or
about May 10, 2025, within the City of Newport, Rhode Island.)

{LC2514/1}

Referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Honorable President Pro Tempore presents the following communications:

State of Rhode Island



Senate Chamber

April 29, 2025

The Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable Members of the Senate:

This is to inform you that the Senate Democratic Caucus met on April 29, 2025 and endorsed Senator Valarie J. Lawson as the Caucus nominee for the office of President of the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Louis P. DiPalma".

Louis P. DiPalma
Secretary of the Senate Democratic Caucus

Placed on file.

State of Rhode Island



Senate Chamber

April 29, 2025

The Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable Members of the Senate:

This is to inform you that the Senate Democratic Caucus met on April 29, 2025 and elected Senator Frank A. Ciccone III as the Senate Majority Leader for the remainder of the 2025-2026 term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lou DiPalma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lou" and last name "DiPalma" clearly distinguishable.

Louis P. DiPalma
Secretary of the Senate Democratic Caucus

Placed on file.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Senator Urso, seconded by Senator Bissaillon, moves that the floor be open to nominations.

The motion to open nominations prevails on a voice vote.

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo declares that nominations for the office of President of the Senate are now in order.

Senator Urso nominates Senator Valarie J. Lawson.

The nomination is seconded by Senators Sosnowski and Murray.

Senator Quezada nominates Senator Ryan W. Pearson.

The nomination is seconded by Senator Euer.

Senator Rogers nominates Senator Jessica de la Cruz.

The nomination is seconded by Senator Paolino.

Senator Dimitri moves that nominations be closed.

The motion to close nominations prevails on a voice vote.

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo directs the Reading Clerk, to call the roll of the body.

The motion to elect Senator Valarie J. Lawson as President of the Senate is read and passed, upon a roll call vote with 24 Senators voting for Senator Lawson, 8 Senators voting for Senator Pearson, 4 Senators voting for Senator de la Cruz and 1 Senator abstaining as follows:

SENATOR LAWSON - 24: Senators Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, Dimitri, DiPalma, Felag, Gallo, Gu, LaMountain, Lauria, Lawson, McKenney, Murray, Patalano, Sosnowski, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, Vargas and Zurier.

SENATOR PEARSON -8: Senators Acosta, DiMario, Euer, Kallman, Mack, Pearson, Quezada, and Valverde.

SENATOR DE LA CRUZ -4: Senators de la Cruz, Morgan, Paolino, and Rogers.

ABSTAINED – 1: Senator Raptakis.

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore announces that Senator Valarie J. Lawson has been elected President of the Rhode Island Senate for the years 2025 and 2026.

OATH OF OFFICE

The Honorable Senate President Pro Tempore introduces the Honorable Secretary of State of Rhode Island, Gregg Amore to administer the oath of Office to the Senate President.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

The Honorable President, Valarie J. Lawson, addresses the members of the Senate and their special guests.

(See Appendix for Presidential Remarks)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Felag announces that the Senate Committee on Finance will meet Thursday at the rise of the senate in Room 211.

Senator Murray announces that the Senate Committee on Education will meet Wednesday at the rise of the senate in Room 313.

Senator Sosnowski announces that the Senate Committee on Commerce will meet Thursday at 3:00pm in Room 212.

Senator Britto announces that the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture will meet Wednesday at the rise of the senate in the senate lounge.

Senator Bissaillon announces that the Senate Committee on Judiciary will meet Thursday at the rise of the senate in Room 313.

Senator Patalano announces that the Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming will meet Wednesday at the rise of the senate in Room 212.

Senator Lauria announces that the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services will meet Thursday at the rise of the senate in the senate lounge.

Senator Appollonio announces that the Senate Committee on Special Legislation will meet Wednesday at the rise of the senate in Room 211.

Senator Tikoian announces the birthdays of Senator Louis P. DiPalma, Senator Ana B. Quezada, Senate Parliamentarian Robert L. Ricci, and Senate Voting Clerk John D. Manni.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Murray and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber John Monse.

Upon suggestion of Senator Morgan and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber Jeffrey Bangs, Angel M. Sosa, Larry Sinnnerman, Michael Dennen, Deborah Jarvais, John Prisco, Ronald Jarvis, David Nunes, Maureen Fontneau, and Beth Nunes,

Upon suggestion of Senator Tikoian and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber the Family of Senate President Lawson; Kathleen McCabe, sister, Kerry Lawson, sister, and Donald McCabe, brother-in-law.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Tikoian, seconded by Senator de la Cruz, the Senate adjourns at 5:40 o'clock P.M.

HELENA S. REID
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix**INVOCATION****SENATOR MATTHEW L. LAMOUNTAIN**

We come before You today with gratitude for the gift of service and the calling to lead. As this body gathers to begin a new, we acknowledge the weight of our responsibility and the privilege of shaping the future of our people. Today, we pause to remember and honor the life and legacy of Senate President Dominick Ruggerio. His decades of dedicated service, steadfast leadership, and deep commitment to the people of this state left an indelible mark on this chamber and all who served alongside him. May his memory be a blessing, and may his example inspire us to lead with integrity, humility, and a heart for public good. Bless this Senate with wisdom, courage, and compassion. May the spirit of unity prevail over division, and may the common good rise above individual gain. In every debate and decision, let integrity guide our words and justice shape our actions. We give thanks for the traditions that have brought us here—the enduring principles upon which this chamber stands. Let us honor those who came before us, whose sacrifices and vision laid the foundation for the freedoms we enjoy. May their legacy, and the legacy of President Ruggerio, inspire us to uphold the values of democracy, dignity, and peace. As we embrace new beginnings, help us to be mindful stewards of this moment in history. May fresh ideas flourish alongside time-honored truths, and may our work reflect the hopes of those we serve. Grant us patience in our deliberations, humility in our power, and perseverance in our purpose. And may the work done in this chamber be a blessing to generations yet to come. Amen.

Appendix

CONSENT CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025:

1. ***The Appointment of Christopher J. Fragomeni (Gubernatorial Appt) VICE Peter Willey to the East Providence Waterfront District for a term expiring March 31, 2029.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

2. ***The Reappointment of Jeffrey E. Bogosian to the Rhode Island Airport Corporation for a term expiring June 1, 2028.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

3. ***The Reappointment of Christopher H. Little, Esq. to the Rhode Island Airport Corporation for a term expiring June 1, 2028.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

4. ***The Reappointment of Jonathan N. Savage to the Rhode Island Airport Corporation for a term expiring June 1, 2029.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

5. ***The Reappointment of George Nee to the Convention Center Authority for a term expiring June 30, 2027.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

6. ***The Reappointment of R. Jeffrey Hirsh to the Convention Center Authority for a term expiring June 30, 2029.***

Committee on Commerce recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

7. **2025-S 992**
 BY McKenney
 ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MAY OF 2025 TO BE “MYOSITIS AWARENESS MONTH IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND”

Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

8. **2025-S 993**
 BY Sosnowski
 ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MAY OF 2025 AS “RHODE ISLAND NATIVE PLANT MONTH”

Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

9. **2025-S 994**
 BY Murray
 ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING MAY OF 2025, AS "NATIONAL SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

10. **2025-H 5694**
 BY Cortvriend
 ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Committee on Housing & Municipal Government recommends passage in concurrence.

Appendix
CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025:

- 1. 2025-S 720**
BY Ciccone
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

Committee on Housing & Municipal Government recommends passage.
- 2. 2025-S 618**
BY Mack
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- VITAL RECORDS

Committee on Judiciary recommends passage.
- 3. 2025-S 959**
BY Ciccone
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ACT

Committee on Labor & Gaming recommends passage.
- 4. 2025-S 591 SUB A**
BY Felag
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO RENAMING THE NEW SAKONNET RIVER BRIDGE, AQUIDNECK ISLAND

Ordered to be placed on the Calendar for passage in concurrence.
- 5. 2025-H 5051 SUB A**
BY Azzinaro
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO RENAMING THE NEW SAKONNET RIVER BRIDGE, AQUIDNECK ISLAND

Ordered to be placed on the Calendar for passage in concurrence.

Appendix

SENATE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

**Valarie J. Lawson**

Senate President

Thank you, Sue and Melissa ... for your extremely kind words.

Donny liked to keep things brief ... so I am going to follow the example he set.

Today, I just want to say thank you.

Your trust in me ... means more than I can express.

Serving as President of the Rhode Island Senate ... will truly be the honor of a lifetime.

Leading our Chamber is an awesome responsibility. I pledge to each of you that I will work tirelessly ... and give my all ... to uphold that responsibility.

My door is always open to you ... and I look forward to working together to address the serious challenges facing our state.

I also want to take a moment to congratulate our new Majority Leader, Frank Ciccone.

I look forward to working in collaboration with him ... our leadership team ... the committee chairs ... and each and every member of this Chamber.

I truly believe our greatest strength lies in the diversity of our backgrounds and perspectives.

We are entering the final, busy weeks of the legislative session. And we are still in mourning.

So I just want to acknowledge the tremendous loss our Chamber has experienced.

Tomorrow, our Senate business will consist exclusively of honoring President Ruggerio.

Far too soon ... and far too often ... we have said goodbye to dear friends.

For Donny ... for Maryellen ... and for Frank ... we persevere.

To honor their memories ... their friendship ... and their incredible service ...

... we join together in common purpose.

We do this for the good of the state we love ... the constituents we represent ... and the Senate in which we are privileged to serve.

I am so fortunate ... to serve alongside each and every one of you.

Thank you all.