

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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 sixth day of January in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight.

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| Volume 125, No. 12 | Thursday, January 29, 1998 | Twelfth Day |
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The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence, Thursday, January 29, 1998, and is called to order at 6:26 o'clock P.M., by the Honorable John B. Harwood, Speaker.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 90 members present and 10 members absent as follows:

PRESENT - 90: The Honorable Speaker Harwood and Representatives Aiken-Salandria, Ajello, Amaral, Anderson, M., Anderson, S., Barone, Barr, Benoit, Benson, Bierman, Burlingame, Callahan, Campbell, Carpenter, Carroll, Carter, Caruolo, Castro, Cicilline, Coderre, Coelho, Costantino, Crowley, Dennigan, DeSimone, Faria, Farrell, Ferguson, Flaherty, Fleury, Fox, Garvey, George, Giannini, Ginaitt, Heffner, Henseler, Hetherington, Iannitelli, Inman, Iwuc, Jacquard, Kelley, Kennedy, Kilmartin, Lally, Lanzi, Levesque, C., Levesque, G., Lima, Little, Long, Lopes, Malik, McCauley, McGowan, McNamara, Menard, Metts, Millard, Montanaro, Moura, Munschy, Murphy, Naughton, Palangio, Palumbo, Panciera, Picard, Pires, Pisaturo, Quick, Rabideau, Reilly, Rose, Russo, Salisbury, Scott, Shavers, Simonian, Slater, Smith, Voccola, Walter, Wasyluk, Watson, Williams, William-son, Winfield.

ABSENT - 10: Representatives Anzeveno, Bramley, Cambio, Kelso, Lowe, Martineau, Mesoilella, Montalbano, San Bento, Sherlock.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker presents Representative Quick, 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 Wednesday, January 28, 1998, is approved as printed.

EFFECTIVE WITHOUT SIGNATURE OF  
THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable Speaker announces receipt by the Secretary of State of the following measure, effective without signature of His Excellency, the Governor:

(98-H 7244) An Act to vacate the forfeiture or revocation of the charter of Van Pelt Realty Corp., effective January 23, 1998.

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

## **GUESTS**

Representative McNamara welcomes to the House as guests Frank "Skip" Pettis, III, and his family, and congratulates him on his heroic efforts in saving the life of Steven McGarry.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Representatives Kilmartin, Moura, Lally and Henseler introduce (98-H 7647) An Act relating to health and safety the State of Rhode Island Cancer Council, Inc.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Slater, Carpenter, Giannini, Barone, Fox and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7648) An Act relating to commercial law.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Slater, Carpenter, Giannini, Barone, Fox and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7649) An Act relating to commercial law - credit card purchases.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Shavers, Benoit, Metts, Ajello, Aiken-Salandria and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7650) An Act relating to Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representatives Ginaitt, Reilly and Benson introduce (98-H 7651) An Act relating to accident and sickness insurance policies.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Moura, Smith, McGowan, DeSimone and Lally introduce (98-H 7652) An Act relating to businesses and professions- pharmacy.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Pisaturo, Carroll, Giannini, Cicilline, Carpenter and Costantino introduce (98-H 7653) House Resolution respectfully requesting the Department of Taxation to submit a study report detailing the implementation of a telefile system.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Amaral, Walter, Little, Malik and Iwuc introduce (98-H 7654) An Act relating to sales and use taxes - liability and computation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Lanzi, Smith, Moura, S. Anderson and Pisaturo introduce (98-H 7655) An Act relating to public officers and employees - merit system.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Giannini, Slater, Palangio, Jacquard, Rose and Coelho introduce (98-H 7656) An Act relating to nonprofit organizations.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Giannini, Russo, Flaherty, Williamson, Murphy and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7657) An Act relating to criminal offenses - mandatory community restitution.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Carter, Henseler and Benson introduce (98-H 7658) House Resolution respectfully requesting that the Public Utilities Commission and Bell Atlantic provide an 885 exchange at the Quonset Point Davisville Industrial Park.

Representative Carter requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Representatives Carter and Burlingame discuss the act.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Carter, seconded by Representative Salisbury, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives Naughton, Flaherty, Aiken-Salandria, Sherlock, Ginaitt and McGowan introduce (98-H 7659) House Resolution congratulating Reverend William Lover on his 25 years of devoted service as Pastor at Woodbury Union Church in Conimicut.

Representative Naughton requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Naughton, seconded by Representative Salisbury, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives McNamara, Naughton, Hetherington, Ginaitt and Reilly introduce (98-H 7660) House Resolution congratulating Frank "Skip" Pettis on his heroic efforts in saving the life of Steven McGarry.

Representative McNamara requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative McNamara, seconded by Representative Salisbury, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representative Malik introduces (98-H 7661) House Resolution respectfully requesting the State Traffic Commission to

install a left turn arrow in the town of Warren.

Representative Malik requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Malik, seconded by Representative Salisbury, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representative Caruolo introduces (98-H 7662) House Resolution creating a special House commission to prepare for the Centennial Celebration of the Rhode Island State House.

Representative Caruolo requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Caruolo, seconded by Representative Salisbury, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives Caruolo, Salisbury and Henseler introduce (98-H 7663) House Resolution extending congratulations.

Representative Caruolo requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Caruolo, seconded by the entire House of Representatives, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives Caruolo, Salisbury and Henseler introduce (98-H 7664) House Resolution extending condolences.

Representative Caruolo requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Caruolo, seconded by the entire House of Representatives, and by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

By agreement of the majority and the minority, the Parliamentarian will read the remaining New Business into the record.

There is no objection.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Representative Simonian introduces (98-H 7665) An Act relating to businesses and professions - public accountancy.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Smith, DeSimone, Palangio, McGowan and Montanaro introduce (98-H 7666) An Act relating to education and school discipline code.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representatives Bierman, Montanaro, Lanzi, Palumbo and Pisaturo introduce (98-H 7667) An Act relating to registration of vehicles.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Reilly, San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 7668) An Act relating to health and safety.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Henseler, Carter, Benson, Kelley, Cicilline and Coelho introduce (98-H 7669) An Act relating to food and drugs - uniform controlled substances act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Carter, Henseler, Kennedy, George and Ginaitt introduce (98-H 7670) An Act relating to refuse disposal.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Energy.

Representative C. Levesque introduces (98-H 7671) An Act relating to towns and cities.

Read and referred to the Committee on Special Legislation.

Representatives George, Menard, Barr, Farrell, Shavers and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7672) An Act relating to telephone sales solicitation act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Naughton, Salisbury, Kennedy, Henseler, Russo and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7673) An Act relating to health and safety - refuse disposal.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Energy.

Representatives Benoit, Coderre and Burlingame introduce (98-H 7674) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$50,000 for Options for Working Parents.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives McGowan and Moura introduce (98-H 7675) An Act relating to labor and labor relations - arbitration of school teacher disputes.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Garvey, Lally, Carpenter, Benson, Metts and several other members of the House introduce (by request) (98-H 7676) An Act relating to children.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Ginaitt, Reilly and Benson introduce (98-H 7677) An Act relating to health maintenance organizations.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives George, Inman, S. Anderson, Murphy, Montanaro and Campbell introduce (98-H 7678) An Act relating

to causes of action.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representative Faria introduces (98-H 7679) An Act relating to accounts and control - direct deposits.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Kennedy, Garvey and Scott introduce (98-H 7680) An Act relating to foundation level school support - determination of state's share.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative S. Anderson introduces (98-H 7681) An Act relating to labor and labor relations - arbitration of municipal employees disputes.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Henseler, S. Anderson, M. Anderson, Kennedy, Long and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7682) An Act relating to motor and other vehicles.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Bierman, Pires, Callahan, Crowley and Moura introduce (98-H 7683) An Act relating to public finance - payment of taxes by credit card.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative McGowan introduces (98-H 7684) An Act relating to taxation.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Representatives Ginaitt, Reilly and Benson introduce (98-H 7685) An Act relating to health and safety health plan modification act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Russo and Giannini introduce (98-H 7686) An Act relating to motor vehicle offenses.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representative McGowan introduces (98-H 7687) An Act creating the uniform employment termination act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Flaherty, Murphy and Faria introduce (98-H 7688) An Act relating to relief of injured and deceased fire fighters and police officers - salary payment.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Benson, Carter, Salisbury, Kelley, Henseler and Callahan introduce (98-H 7689) An Act relating to public property and works authorizing the transfer of property located in the town of North Kingstown to the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Giannini, Pires, Quick, Moura and Scott introduce (98-H 7690) An Act relating to excise on motor vehicles and trailers.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Russo, Cambio and Voccola introduce (98-H 7691) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$20,000 for the Johnston Senior Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Slater, Carter, Benson, Quick, Munschy and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7692) An Act relating to electricians.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Benson, Garvey, Carter, Ajello, Metts and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7693) An Act relating to education.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representatives Henseler, Carter, Benson, Kelley, Cicilline and Coelho introduce (98-H 7694) An Act relating to businesses and professions -veterinary practice.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Benoit, Burlingame, Carroll and Coderre introduce (98-H 7695) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$100,000 for Rhode Island Rape Crisis Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Benoit and Carroll introduce (98-H 7696) Joint Resolution amending the permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care in Rhode Island.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representatives Costantino, Benoit, Cicilline, Slater, Henseler and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7697) An Act relating to confidentiality of health care communications and information act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representative Reilly introduces (98-H 7698) House Resolution extending the reporting date of the special House commission to study the beneficial use of spent foundry sand.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Energy.

Representatives Rose, Coelho, Dennigan and Barone introduce (98-H 7699) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$32,000 for the East Providence Senior Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Benoit, Munschy, Picard, Martineau and Burlingame introduce (98-H 7700) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$4,000 for Volunteers in Woonsocket Schools program.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Kelley, Salisbury and Garvey introduce (98-H 7701) An Act reinstating and restoring forfeited or revoked corporate charters.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Garvey, Sherlock, McNamara, Reilly and Rabideau introduce (98-H 7702) An Act relating to the certification of child care and youth workers.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representatives Palangio, George, Giannini, Slater, Metts, Carpenter and Wasylyk introduce (98-H 7703) An Act relating to property subject to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Palangio, Giannini, Slater, Metts, Carpenter and Wasylyk introduce (98-H 7704) An Act relating to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Bierman, Long, Walter, Millard and Iannitelli introduce (98-H 7705) An Act relating to criminal offenses- child abuse.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Callahan, Barone, Cicilline, Ajello, C. Levesque and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 7706) An Act relating to health care for children and pregnant women.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

## **TRANSMITTAL**

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

## **APPOINTMENTS**

The Honorable Speaker appoints Representatives Caruolo, Naughton, Henseler, Salisbury and Benson as a Committee to escort His Honor, Lieutenant Governor and the members of the Honorable Senate to join the House of Representatives in Joint Session for the purpose of receiving the State of the State Address of His Excellency, the Governor.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:43 o'clock P.M. on motion of Representative M. Anderson, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Edward B. McConnon, seconded by Representatives Caruolo and the entire House of Representatives, the House adjourns, on a unanimous rising vote.

LINDA McELROY



Recording Clerk

## **Appendix**

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### **INVOCATION**

**REPRESENTATIVE JOAN B. QUICK**

Lord, as we in this chamber, embark upon our daily tasks and anticipate the address we will receive from His Excellency, the Governor; by your guidance, may we be liberal in our compassion, conservative in our criticism and independent in our consideration.Amen.

## **Appendix**

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### **PROCEEDINGS IN JOINT SESSION**

Thursday, January 29, 1998

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, Bernard A. Jackvony, in the Chair.

### **CALLED TO ORDER**

The Joint Session is called to order at 6:55 o'clock P.M.

Upon suggestion of His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, and by unanimous consent, the reading of the roll of the Senate and the roll of the House of Representatives is dispensed with, there being a quorum of the Senate and a quorum of the House of Representatives present, therefore a quorum of the Joint Session.

Upon suggestion of His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, and by unanimous consent, the reading of the Resolution (98-H 7587) of invitation is dispensed with.

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, by unanimous consent, appoints Senators O'Leary, Connors, Nygaard, McDonald, Oster, Walsh, Bates, Blais and Gibbs, and Representatives Caruolo, Henseler, Naughton, Salisbury, Martineau and Benson, a Committee to escort His Excellency, the Governor, Lincoln Almond and guests to the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the State University and College Presidents enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Mayors, Town Administrators and Local City and Town Officials enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Directors of the Executive Departments and invited guests enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while members of the Judiciary enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while members of the Governor's family and special guests enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Honorable James R. Langevin, Secretary of State, and the Honorable Jeffrey B. Pine, Attorney General, enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while His Excellency, the Governor, Lincoln Almond, enters the Chamber.

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, presents His Excellency, the Governor, Lincoln Almond, to the Joint Session. The Governor delivers his Annual Message.

(See Appendix for Annual Message.)

Upon suggestion of His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, and by unanimous consent, the Joint Session attends while the committee escorts His Excellency, the Governor, Lincoln Almond, members of the Governor's family and invited guests from the Chamber.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion of Representative Harwood, seconded by Senator Kelly, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session adjourns and the two Houses separate at 7:44 o'clock P.M.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.  
Clerk of the Senate

## **Appendix**

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

PROVIDENCE

### **GOVERNOR LINCOLN ALMOND'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

Thursday, January 29, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Governor Jackvony; Majority Leader Kelly; Members of the General Assembly; Members of the Judiciary; Distinguished guests.

As I stand before the General Assembly and the people of Rhode Island this evening, I'm very proud to report that Rhode Island is on the right track -- to compete, thrive and prosper in the 21st Century.

We're ready because I as your Governor and you, the members of the General Assembly have had the vision to make fundamental changes in the way we do business.

We should all be very proud!

We have taken bold steps to improve our business climate, and we've helped create thousands of new jobs for Rhode

Island families.

We have 24,500 more Rhode Islanders working today than when I became your Governor.

Unemployment is down by 30% over the same period. We've got an impressive list of companies that are all adding jobs in Rhode Island.

Fidelity, Fleet, CVS, Hospital Trust, and Citizens Bank, just to name a few.

And for the first time in Rhode Island's history, business, labor and government are working together and united in keeping our state on track and moving in the right direction for all our citizens.

Make no mistake about it my fellow Rhode Islanders.

We've got the energy, the vision, the commitment, and the ideas to make our state number one in the country.

And you know what I'm really proud of? We're doing it the right way -- with compassion!

I was very proud to be invited to the White House by President Clinton, who praised Rhode Island for our commitment to our children.

One state is leading the nation, in providing expanded health coverage to kids. That's Rhode Island.

One state is leading the nation in making child care an entitlement for working families. That's Rhode Island.

One state led the nation in restructuring utilities. That's Rhode Island. Thank you George Caruolo for your leadership on this important issue.

Rhode Island is not just going to enter the 21st century, Rhode Island is going to lead the way.

As Governor, I'm proud of the changes we've made to give people renewed hope in their future and our state's future.

City by city, and town by town, we're lifting the spirit of Rhode Island.

But I know that the remarkable progress we have seen in our state could not have happened without the help of many people.

Whether it's the business community, labor, the academic community, the General Assembly, or every day Rhode Islanders, countless people have done their part to put Rhode Island on a path to success.

To all those who have stepped up to the plate, I congratulate you and thank you.

Let's take a closer look at just how far we've come in preparing Rhode Island for the next century.

We're finally investing in Quonset Point, and it's paying off. Quonset is on the move.

Since I've been Governor, 30, quality businesses have moved there. That means more than 1000 jobs, and it also means over \$200 million in private investment.

Our new Master Plan for Quonset lays out the potential for thousands of more jobs. Let's get it done.

While we're adding jobs in the private sector throughout Rhode Island, we're cutting jobs in state government. We have reduced the state workforce by nearly 1,000 people. We have eliminated three departments of state government.

We dramatically cut the DEPCO debt by several hundred million dollars. We are putting the credit union crisis behind us.

We faced large budget deficits head on. We've lowered taxes and produced a budget surplus.

That's the kind of vision and results people demand and that's the kind of vision and results we've delivered!

We all know our highways and roads were neglected for too long. For years, people paid for better roads. Unfortunately, we didn't get them.

We're putting an end to that. Finally, we're putting the money you and I pay at the gas pump where it belongs -- in the roads. We're investing in our roads and it's showing.

We're finally doing something about the Masonic Temple after 70 years of neglect by turning it into a luxury hotel. Even the New York Times highlighted our progress in a recent article.

And we're finally restoring our magnificent State House.

As we applaud the progress we're making at the State House, let's be equally proud of the work we're doing to preserve our parks and beaches, our colleges and university.

We're putting much needed investment in every single one of these treasures.

We can't afford not to. And on a personal note, as a graduate of the University of Rhode Island, a school that I am so very proud of, I'm asking you to join with me this evening in putting together a public-private partnership to build a new and much needed gymnasium at the University of Rhode Island.

And Marilyn and I want to be the first two Rhode Islanders to make a personal contribution of \$1000 towards that goal. And I challenge every URI alum and the people of Rhode Island to join me in making this dream for our State University a reality.

As we invest in the bricks and mortar in our state, we're also investing in the heart and soul of our state -- our people.

We reformed welfare. We're moving people from dependence to independence. More Rhode Island families are working. Caseloads are down.

I am so proud as your Governor, working with the members of the General Assembly, that we have helped these families find independence.

We're seeing success because we took bold measures. We're making sure that all kids have access to health care and that working families have safe, quality child care readily available to them. These are the programs families want and need, and we're providing them.

Our investment in health care is paying off. Under Rite care, more women are getting proper prenatal care. Child immunization rates continue to increase. Infant mortality has been reduced.

In just two short years, the number of low birth weight babies in our capital city has been cut in half.

Virtually every child in Rhode Island has access to health coverage.

My goal as we enter the next century is to have health care readily available to 100% percent of our kids. Please join me in making this happen.

Working together we've proven that we can tackle even the biggest challenges. Last year we set education reform in

motion by passing legislation to prepare our schools for the 21st century.

We can now measure the success or failure of school systems right down to the neighborhood school.

If a school isn't measuring up, we need to know it and we will work with them to improve.

We can also learn from schools that do measure up.

While we strive to improve education in Rhode Island, we can never forget that we have many talented students in our schools right now. Let's never lose sight of that.

Just two days ago I was at a rally to cheer on Rhode Island's academic decathlon teams. These kids want to learn and they want to succeed.

Tonight, I want to recognize a group of students who are studying hard and achieving great results. Middletown High School students worked with their teachers and with engineers from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center to build a robot. You should have seen their robot. It was very impressive and it won an award for the best design in the nation.

These students are proof positive that we have 21st century thinkers in our schools. These are the engineers and scientists of tomorrow. These are some of the students that will help make Rhode Island's future bright. They are also proof that our community does care and wants to be involved. I want to thank the engineers and teachers for helping these students.

I'd like to ask the students, their teachers and a special recognition to Captain Lougue, to please stand and be recognized.

All Rhode Island parents share one common goal. We always want our children and our grandchildren to be able to live and work in Rhode Island.

For years that seemed like an impossible dream as many Rhode Island manufacturing companies went south in search of lower costs and better conditions. The good news is we're turning that around and bringing lost jobs back to Rhode Island. Amtrol and Hope Webbing Company are proof positive of that fact.

When Amtrol changed hands last year, I met with the new management team to show them the benefits of remaining in Rhode Island -- a great workforce, a more friendly business climate, and training for employees.

We've been home to Amtrol for more than five decades, but we knew they could have moved their operations anywhere in the nation.

There was no way I was going to let this happen. We did our part, and we convinced them to stay. In keeping them here, we had a lot of help from the employees who trained and improved their skills. I appreciate their help.

This was a big win for Rhode Island because Amtrol is not only remaining in Rhode Island, they're moving their Tennessee plant here.

Let's also give a hand to Hope Webbing Company. This company recently announced plans to expand its manufacturing operations in our state by moving a South Carolina plant to Cumberland. This means more than 200 new jobs for Rhode Islanders. These are great success stories for our state.

I can't think of a better way to enter the 21st century than with the job announcements and the business expansions we've seen over the past three years.

With great vision and enthusiastic energy, let's talk about the 21st century. When I think about the years to come I think about our children. My children. My grandchildren. Your children.

It's our job to give these kids a brighter future. That's why I'm proud to serve on the National Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood.

Our mission is to study federal and state policies and their impact on our children from birth to age 3. We've learned that this is the most important period in their development.

That's why I'm proud to announce my ambitious and visionary plan called Starting Right. This plan will make Rhode Island far and away the number one state in America when it comes to helping kids get the most out of the first three years of life.

Many children this age have one thing in common. They're in day care.

As our workforce continues to change, child care has become the single most important issue facing working families.

Any mother or father whose child is in day care can relate to this. That's why we've already made Rhode Island the only state that offers an entitlement to safe, quality, affordable child care.

Many of our employers are small businesses.

We are a small business state.

These businesses can't afford to set up day care centers on their own. We've got to help them and that's what I intend to do.

For starters, we need to help small businesses create partnerships with others and child care centers to expand day care.

The centerpiece of my Starting Right program is the dramatic expansion of our child care entitlement. That's something we can all be proud of.

I'm proud to announce that this plan will help give child care to middle class working families earning as much \$47 thousand dollars a year.

That means nearly 11 thousand new families will be eligible for this assistance. That's something we can all be proud of.

As we set out to create a better child care system, the key will be ensuring that when our kids are in day care, they're learning.

This Starting Right plan will also provide grants and assistance to child care centers to help them expand and improve programs.

Also, the Starting Right plan will create more after school programs for kids up to the age of sixteen. This was one of the key recommendations of my Juvenile Justice Task Force which found that teenagers get into the most trouble in the hours immediately after school. Instead of putting kids at risk, let's give them something meaningful to do.

I've had a lot of help in putting the Starting Right plan together. Next week I'll be joining those who took part in the Danforth Foundation conference to further detail this plan. I thank them for their help and look forward to making this plan a reality.

In March I'll be convening a statewide Child Care Summit to mobilize support from our entire community to meet our child care goals.

One of the reasons child care is so important to me is that we must ensure that our kids enter school ready to learn.

Once our kids are in school it's our responsibility to give them an education that prepares them for the future.

This is perhaps our greatest challenge and one that will take our greatest efforts, energy and vision.

We took a giant step forward last year to make our schools better. We worked with Representative Paul Crowley, Senator Michael Lenihan, and many others to enact landmark education reform.

This gave us a comprehensive education strategy that had three simple goals: First, address the equity issue. Second, raise academic standards. And third, strengthen accountability for every school.

Let's look at the equity issue. All students deserve a quality education.

It's our responsibility to make that happen and it will happen if we take the equity issue seriously. Let's face it. Urban schools have more students from families in need.

They've got more students who don't use English as their primary language. They've got more students from single parent families.

That's why I have consistently pushed for more education aid to urban schools. Let's stay the course.

Now let's talk about raising students' academic standards. We need to do more to help our kids perform better.

We've started this process by introducing rigorous testing of fourth, eighth and tenth grade students. We can't just give our kids a multiple choice exam. We're now requiring that our students be able to read a problem, organize their thoughts, solve the problem and show their work.

Results from these tests indicate that we have a long way to go in making sure that our kids leave school ready to work. Is it acceptable that only one third of 10th graders tested had the ability to write a persuasive essay? That's not acceptable to me.

Is it acceptable that only 25 percent of 10th graders had the math skills to solve real life math problems? Of course not. That's not acceptable to me and that should not be acceptable to any parent, teacher or student.

There are those who'll say we're asking too much of our kids. I say for far too long we haven't asked enough.

Let me make something perfectly clear. We can't fault our students if we don't challenge them. And the students I've met welcome this challenge.

That's why everyone must step up to the plate to make our schools better.

One of the best ways to help kids get the most out of school is to give them a good start. I will set aside \$1 million of state education aid for school districts to develop full day kindergarten and to implement preschool programs.

We also need to give our teachers the tools to help them improve their skills so they can meet the challenge of educating a new generation of students.

I will set aside an additional \$1 million for teacher training.

Just as engineers can help students build robots, we need to help our students read.

As Governor, one of the things I love doing most is visiting our classrooms with my wife, Marilyn, to read to our kids. It's fun. It's gratifying. And it's important.

I want to commend Lieutenant Governor Jackvony for doing his part by launching Rhode Island Reads which brings various community leaders into our classrooms.

I urge everyone to join them. It is fun, and it does help.

Think about the classroom.

What's the single most important part of any classroom in America? The teacher. I'm sure we all remember that special teacher who inspired us to expand our horizons and succeed.

To honor the special role teachers play in our lives, I'm pleased to introduce a teacher who clearly has had an enormous impact on her students.

This teacher has taught for 27 years in the East Providence School System. She embodies exactly what we need in our teachers. She sets high standards. She challenges her students to meet them. And most of all, she cares.

There's nothing more we could ask from a teacher.

Please welcome Rhode Island's 1997 Teacher of the Year, Maureen Whalen Spaight. Thank you Maureen.

Just as urban education is important, so is creating jobs in our urban areas. You've heard me say it a million times. There's no problem that can't be solved by a good job. Let's encourage businesses in enterprise zones to help people who live there by giving them expanded tax credits.

We must continue the process of tax reform. We started with the income tax cut to make Rhode Island more competitive.

We moved the gas tax and we lowered business taxes.

Now we need to address the single most regressive tax in Rhode Island -- the property tax.

As I travel around our state, people tell me all the time, Governor, do something about that property tax. I am going to do something. Next week I'll unveil my plans to provide long overdue property tax relief to Rhode Island homeowners.

To the members of the General Assembly, I urge you to join me in this effort.

Let's talk about our environment.

We're so fortunate to be an ocean state. One of the things Marilyn and I love to do is spend time on the beach.

Rhode Islanders love their parks, bike paths, beaches, and open spaces. We have a responsibility to preserve these natural treasures for future generations.

We've done a great job in protecting our environment. But we can always do more.

That's why I am pleased to announce that I'll be seeking a \$15 million bond to continue our expansion of bike paths, greenways and open space.

One of the biggest challenges facing Rhode Island in the next century will be the continued aging of our population.

Rhode Island has the 3rd highest percentage of people who are 65 and older. Our parents and our grandparents want to live independently for as long as they can. It's our job to help them do that.

I know how important independence is for our parents. My mom is 87 years of age, and she lives independently.

Let's make sure that thousands of people like my mom can continue to enjoy their independence.



We are already offering alternatives to nursing homes. That's the right thing to do.

We've even moved a number of patients out of nursing homes to assisted living arrangements.

We must do even more to help our seniors lead more fulfilling lives.

That's why I'm pleased to announce that I'll be asking voters to approve a bond issue to create a new Center on Aging.

This facility will serve as the new home for the Department of Elderly Affairs at the Howard Complex in Cranston.

This state-of-the-art Center on Aging will include an information and referral network that will link the facility with senior centers, elderly housing complexes, community agencies and even individuals through the Internet.

This new facility will house a consumer education center offering seminars and workshops.

It will have a library and clearinghouse on aging which will be the first of its kind in our state.

Let me say in closing that just as Rhode Island led the nation into the Industrial Revolution, Rhode Island can lead our nation into the 21st century.

We've got the energy, the vision, and the commitment, to give Rhode Islanders the best health care, the best child care, the best education, the best business climate and the very best quality of life in America.

I know this is the future Rhode Islanders want. It's a future I want to lead us to.

I thank the people of Rhode Island for their support and assistance and for giving me the privilege and honor of serving as your Governor. But our work is not done.

Together, let's continue to make great things happen for Rhode Island. Thank you, and good evening.

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As always, your [comments](#) concerning this page are welcomed and appreciated.

Thank you for stopping by!

