

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.

Volume 125, No. 18 Thursday, February 12, 1998 Eighteenth Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence, Thursday, February 12, 1998, and is called to order at 3:17 o'clock P.M., by the Honorable John B. Harwood, Speaker.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 98 members present and 2 members absent as follows:

PRESENT 98: The Honorable Speaker Harwood and Representatives Aiken-Salandria, Ajello, Amaral, Anderson, M., Anderson, S., Anzeveno, Barone, Barr, Benoit, Benson, Bierman, Bramley, Callahan, Cambio, 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, Kelso, Kennedy, Kilmartin, Lally, Lanzi, Levesque, C., Levesque, 6., Lima, Little, Long, Lopes, Lowe, Malik, Martineau, McCauley, McGowan, McNamara, Menard, Mesolessa, Metts, Millard, Montalbano, Montanaro, Moura, Munschy, Murphy, Naughton, Palangio, Palumbo, Panciera, Picard, Pires, Pisaturo, Quick, Rabideau, Reilly, Rose, Russo, San Bento, Scott, Shavers, Sherlock, Simonian, Slater, Smith, Voccola, Walter, Wasylyk, Watson, Williams, Williamson, Winfield.

ABSENT - 2: Representatives Burlingame, Salisbury.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker presents Representative Walter, who delivers the Invocation and leads the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(For Invocation, see Appendix, this Journal.)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Representative Burlingame will be unable to attend today's session due to an important community meeting in the city of Woonsocket.

NOTICES OF BILL/RESOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Representative Carroll gives notice that on the next legislative day she will introduce a measure concerning taxation town of Glocester. This notice is given in compliance with House Rule 41.

MARY ANN CARROLL
Representative, District 15

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

Representative Henseler gives notice that on the next legislative day she will introduce a measure concerning underground storage tanks. This notice is given in compliance with House Rule 41.

SUZANNE M. HENSELER
Representative, District 44

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

Representative Lally gives notice that on the next legislative day he will introduce a measure concerning city and town clerks. This notice is given in compliance with House Rule 41.

DONALD J. LALLY, JR.
Representative, District 48

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

Representative Lally gives notice that on the next legislative day he will introduce a measure concerning the town of Narragansett. This notice is given in compliance with House Rule 41.

DONALD J. LALLY, JR.
Representative, District 48

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

Representative Costantino gives notice that on the next legislative day he will introduce a measure relating to motor vehicles- speed restrictions. This notice is given in compliance with House Rule 41.

STEVEN M. COSTANTINO
Representative, District 14

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Representative Martineau, for the Committee on Corporations, reports back the following measure (98-H 7810), with recommendation of transfer to the Committee on Labor:

(98-H 7810) An Act relating to businesses and professions requiring registration of roofing contractors. Received and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representative Flaherty, for the Committee on Judiciary, reports back the following measure (98-H 7555), with recommendation of transfer to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare:

(98-H 7555) An Act relating to food and drugs - uniform controlled substances act. Received and referred to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Representative Benoit, for the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare, reports back the following measure (98-H 7440), with recommendation of transfer to the Committee on Finance:

(98-H 7440) An Act relating to human services - residential care and assisted living facilities. Received and referred to the Committee on Finance.

NEW BUSINESS

Representative Anzeveno introduces (98-H 8410) House Resolution congratulating the Diabetes Foundation of Rhode Island on their tremendous success in helping Rhode Islanders with diabetes.

Representative Anzeveno requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

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

Representative Winfield introduces (98-H 8411) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$4,137.97 to pay the claim of Raymond 6. Donilon of 715 Putnam Pike #1114, Smithfield, Rhode Island 02828.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Accounts and Claims.

Representative Mesolella introduces (98-H 8412) An Act relating to public officers and employees - retirement system - administration.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Ginaitt, Sherlock, McNamara, Naughton and Aiken-Salandria introduce (98-H 8413) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$10,000 for Volunteers in Warwick Schools.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Rabideau, Naughton and Kelley introduce (98-H 8414) An Act relating to fish and wildlife - licensing.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Barone, Dennigan, Coderre, Pisaturo, Cicilline and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8415) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$10,000 for Planned Parenthood of Rhode Island.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Faria introduces (98-H 8416) An Act relating to businesses and professions -professional regulation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Representatives Amaral, Campbell, Quick, Kelley and Walter introduce (98-H 8417) An Act relating to motor and other vehicles- operation of bicycles.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Highway Safety.

Representatives San Bento, Carpenter, Montalbano, Reilly and Kelso introduce (98-H 8418) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Disabled American Veterans of Rhode Island.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 8419) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Woodlawn Cowboys Football Organization.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Iwuc, Farrell, Reilly and Menard introduce (98-H 8420) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Club Juventude Lusitania Band.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 8421) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Pawtucket-Fairlawn Little League, Inc.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Iwuc, Farrell, Reilly and Menard introduce (98-H 8422) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$15,000 for R.E.A.C.H. Program.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Iwuc, Farrell, Reilly and Menard introduce (98-H 8423) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$10,000 for B.F. Norton Family Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 8424) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Woodlawn Little League.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Benson and Carter introduce (98-H 8425) House Resolution honoring Janaina Stanley for receiving a Bronze Distinguished Finalist Medallion from Prudential Spirit of Community Initiative.

Representative Benson requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

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

Representatives Benson and Carter introduce (98-H 8426) House Resolution honoring Laura Berman on being selected Rhode Island's Top Youth Volunteer by the Prudential Spirit of Community Initiative.

Representative Benson requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

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

Representatives Iwuc, Farrell, Reilly and Menard introduce (98-H 8427) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$20,000 for Peer Leadership Program.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 8428) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Pawtucket C.P.U.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Williamson introduces (98-H 8429) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for West Warwick Bambino League.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Lopes introduces (98-H 8430) An Act relating to state police.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Representatives Reilly, Iwuc, Farrell and Menard introduce (98-H 8431) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for Diamond Hill Cub Scouts, Pack 1.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento, Carpenter, Montalbano, Reilly and Kelso introduce (98-H 8432) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$25,000 for Free Wheelers Association of Rhode Island, Inc.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Iwuc, Farrell, Reilly and Menard introduce (98-H 8433) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Club Juventude Lusitania School.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Ginaitt and Aiken-Salandria introduce (98-H 8434) Joint Resolution reinstating the life of and extending the reporting and expiration dates of the special legislative commission to study and review the effects of the Rhode Island Guardianship Law.

Representative Ginaitt requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Ginaitt, seconded by Representatives Quick and Rabideau, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives Bierman, Montanaro, Lanzi, Palumbo and Pisaturo introduce (98-H 8435) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$25,000 for Cranston CAP for sexual abuse counseling.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Castro, Metts, Lopes, Fox, Moura and Faria introduce (98-H 8436) Joint Resolution calling upon the governments of Cape Verde, the United States of America and the State of Rhode Island to form a state relationship between Rhode Island and Cape Verde.

Read and referred to the Committee on Special Legislation.

Representatives Munschy, Picard, Martineau and Benoit introduce (98-H 8437) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$10,000 for Autumn Fest - Woonsocket.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard and Martineau introduce (98-H 8438) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for Chateau Claire Senior Citizens' Association.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Williamson introduces (98-H 8439) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$25,000 for Directions, Inc.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George, Scott and Carter introduce (98-H 8440) Joint Resolution making 'an appropriation of \$500 for Exeter Senior Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George, Inman, S. Anderson and Montanaro introduce (98-H 8441) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$3,000 for Coventry Library.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George, Scott and Carter introduce (98-H 8442) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$3,000 for Exeter Library.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George, Scott and Carter introduce (98-H 8443) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$500 for Tis the Season in Exeter.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Amaral, Long, Little, C. Levesque and Smith introduce (98-H 8444) An Act relating to sales tax - flea markets.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives San Bento and Montalbano introduce (98-H 8445) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Fairlawn Cardinal A.D., Inc.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Dennigan, Ajello, Benoit, Aiken-Salandria, Shavers and several other members of the House introduce

(98-H 8446) Joint Resolution memorializing the President and Congress to redirect sufficient money from the defense budget to address increased domestic needs.

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

Representative S. Anderson introduces (98-H 8447) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$48.99 to pay the claim of Laura Findley of 1150 Narragansett Boulevard, Cranston, Rhode Island 02905.

Read and referred to the Joint Committee on Accounts and Claims.

Representatives Winfield and Iannitelli introduce (98-H 8448) An Act relating to taxation -levy and assessment of local taxes.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Munsch, Picard and Martineau introduce (98-H 8449) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for Woonsocket High School Band.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George, Inman, S. Anderson and Montanaro introduce (98-H 8450) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$500.00 for Tis the Season in Coventry.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Sherlock, Naughton, Ginaitt, McNamara, Aiken-Salandria and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8451) An Act relating to state budget - public finance.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative San Bento introduces (98-H 8452) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Barton Street Community Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative San Bento introduces (98-H 8453) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$30,000 for Rhode Island Council on Alcoholism.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Williamson introduces (98-H 8454) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for West Warwick Pop Warner Football.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representative Williamson introduces (98-H 8455) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$15,000 for Crompton 's Veterans' Organization.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George and Scott introduce (98-H 8456) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$3,000 for West Greenwich Library.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George and Scott introduce (98-H 8457) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$500 for Tis the Season in West Greenwich.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives George and Watson introduce (98-H 8458) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$3,000 for East Greenwich Library.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Carter, Benson, Garvey and Henseler introduce (98-H 8459) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$100,000 for the Department of State Library Services.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard and Martineau introduce (98-H 8460) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for Cub Scout Pack #6.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard and Martineau introduce (98-H 8461) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for East Woonsocket Little League.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard and Martineau introduce (98-H 8462) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for St. Joseph's Veterans Association.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard, Martineau and Benoit introduce (98-H 8463) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for Woonsocket Junior High School Band.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Sherlock, Ginaitt, Aiken-Salandria, McNamara, Naughton and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8464) An Act relating to additional state aid to municipalities.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Munschy, Picard, Martineau and Benoit introduce (98-H 8465) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$2,500 for St. Joseph Senior Citizens.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Benoit, Sherlock, Moura, Walter, Hetherington and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8466) An Act relating to human services.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Malik and Millard introduce (98-H 8467) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$1,000 for Warren Animal Shelter.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Malik and Millard introduce (98-H 8468) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$9,000 for Warren Fire Department.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Malik and Millard introduce (98-H 8469) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$3,000 for Warren D.A.R.E.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Malik and Millard introduce (98-H 8470) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$1,500 for Warren Federal Blue's.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Quick, C. Levesque and Little introduce (98-H 8471) An Act relating to enterprise zones.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Williamson and Murphy introduce (98-H 8472) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$50,000 for West Warwick Senior Citizens' Center.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Williamson and Murphy introduce (98-H 8473) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$25,000 for the American Legion in West Warwick.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Williamson, Farrell, Shavers, C. Levesque, Ajello and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8474) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$250,000 for Department of Administration.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives Metts, Castro, Shavers, Fox and Carpenter introduce (98-H 8475) House Resolution declaring February 20, 1998 as "Buffalo Soldier Day" in Rhode Island.

Representative Metts requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on motion of Representative Metts, seconded by Representatives Slater, Long and Castro, and by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

Representatives Williamson and Murphy introduce (98-H 8476) Joint Resolution making an appropriation of \$5,000 for Pawtuxet Valley Historical Society.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Representatives C. Levesque, Quick and Little introduce (98-H 8477) An Act relating to the town of Portsmouth - Juvenile Hearing Board.

Read and referred to the Committee on Corporations.

Representatives Salisbury, Watson, Long, Quick, Campbell and several other members of the House introduce (98-H 8478) An Act making appropriations for the support of the state for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1999.

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.

GUESTS

Representative Kelso welcomes to the House as guests Armindo Medina, Rhode Island Culinary Federation - Chef of the Year, and his wife Lisa, also Carl Santilli, Cheryl Johnson and Jacob Licht.

Also:

Representative Callahan welcomes to the House Chambers Sara Whitwright, a Town Councilwoman from Narragansett.

Also:

Representative Farrell welcomes to the House of Representatives Mayor Lee M. Matthews.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative George wishes Jill Anderson, our page in the House of Representatives, a happy "19th" birthday. Jill is the daughter of Representative Stephen Anderson.

Also:

Representative Carter extends a very happy birthday to Representative Benson.

APPOINTMENTS

The Honorable Speaker appoints Representatives Henseler, Benson, Kennedy, Quick, Rose and Long, as a Committee to escort His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor and the members of the Honorable Senate to join the House of Representatives in Joint Session for the purpose of receiving the Budget Address of His Excellency, the Governor.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3:48 o'clock P.M. on motion of the Honorable Speaker Harwood, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Ida Ricci; on motion of Representative Kelley, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of G. Morgan Phillips former owner of the Larchwood Inn; on motion of Representative Lopes, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Peter Pena; on motion of Representative Sherlock, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Abraham Klitzner; on motion of Representative Lima, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Charles Simoneau, seconded by Representatives Carter and Callahan, the House adjourns, on a unanimous rising vote.

LINDA McELROY

Recording Clerk

Appendix

INVOCATION

REPRESENTATIVE MARY LOU WALTER

This is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Lord help us to remember that we must be servants before we can be leaders, we must serve the people well before we can lead them well. Help us to remember whose we are and whom we serve. It is you Lord.Amen.

Appendix

PROCEEDINGS IN JOINT SESSION

Thursday, February 12, 1998

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

CALLED TO ORDER

The Joint Session is called to order at 3:55 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 8408) of invitation is dispensed with.

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, by unanimous consent, appoints Senators Tavares, Kells, Sasso, Celona, Cote, Sosnowski, Parella, Patterson and Breene, and Representatives Caruolo, Salisbury, Kennedy, Rose, Coelho and Walter, 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 the Honorable James R. Langevin, Secretary of State, and the Honorable Nancy J. Mayer, General Treasurer, enter the Chamber.

AT EASE

Upon suggestion of His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session is declared at ease at 3:59 o'clock P.M. until the call of the chair.

CALLED TO ORDER

Joint Session is called to order at 4:01 o'clock P.M.

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 Budget Message.

(See Appendix for Budget 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, and invited guests from the Chamber.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Representative Harwood, seconded by Senator Fogarty, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session adjourns and the two Houses separate at 4:23 o'clock P.M.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.
Clerk of the Senate

Appendix

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
PROVIDENCE

GOVERNOR LINCOLN ALMOND'S

BUDGET ADDRESS

Thursday, February 12, 1998

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

To the Honorable, the General Assembly

I hereby transmit to you today the Fiscal Year 1999 Budget.

I have always said that our State budget must be a tool to invest in our future. The budget that I am transmitting to you certainly meets that test. It is a product of the groundwork we have collectively laid over the last three years to institute a financial management program for the State of Rhode Island. I spoke to you last year about my multi-year approach to state finances and the need to invest for the future. Investments like the tax law changes that enabled us to attract Fidelity Investments to Rhode Island place us in a competitive position for the years ahead. My Administration's effort to rebuild and invest in Rhode Island has begun to transform the state. We have gone from a state with a high debt load and a relatively high tax burden, to a state which has a more modest tax burden and significantly less reliance on debt. We have also increased our ability and capacity to address the state's neglected infrastructure needs that regrettably were allowed to decay for so many years.

My FY 1999 budget is a financial management plan that provides:

Property tax relief to the homeowners of our cities and towns a series of childcare initiatives that build upon our nationally recognized child care programs

A second reduction of the state income tax rate to 26.5% of federal liability

Phase two of the pay-as-you-go program for asset protection that we began last year

A continued shift of gas tax monies to transportation programs including RIPTA

Further investments in economic development, technologies and education

The major programs and initiatives that I am proposing for funding include:

Tax Relief

I recommend that we institute a five year property tax relief program that will give homeowners a \$135 tax credit on their tax bill the first year and increase up to a \$175 tax credit by year five. The first year's property tax program will cost \$32.5 million and be financed by excess sales tax revenues from DEPCO. By year five, the \$175 tax credit will cost the state \$43.8 million and that too will be completely financed from excess sales tax revenues.

I recommend the continued reduction of the personal income tax from 27% in 1998 to 26.5% in 1999. As you know, last year we began the income tax reduction process that in five years would drop our rate from 27.5% to 25%. When we reach 25% of the federal tax liability, Rhode Island's effective top tax rate will be under 10%.

Child Care Initiatives

Our children are our future. When we invest in our children we invest for the future. I recommend that we devote \$1 million of new resources for childcare initiatives. This \$1 million represents the first year commitment of a three-year plan to fund:

- an expansion of child care entitlement to working families from 185% to 250% of federal poverty levels over a three year period. Raising the income eligibility limit while also gradually increasing the parent's share of the payment for care would enable working parents to build their careers and earnings capacity and assure quality care for their children.
- an expansion of childcare options through age 16. This three-year phase-in to increase eligibility from age 12 to age 16 represents implementation of one of the major recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Task Force report.
- Health Insurance for Child Care Center Employees. Over the next three years, I am recommending that we establish a system through which childcare centers can buy into RIte Care, the state's managed care program, on behalf of their

employees.

- an expansion of start.up funding to create more privately operated childcare resources and opportunities for care throughout Rhode Island. This program will also phase in over a three.year period.

- an expanded program for the training and accreditation of childcare providers is also recommended to be phased in over a three-year period. This program will better prepare our children to enter school while providing uniformity in terms of curriculum development and professional educational practices.

Commitment to Seniors

I am proposing in my Capital Budget a Center on Aging to be established at the Howard Complex. This building will house the Department of Elderly Affairs in a central location, with easy access by highway or mass transit. I will propose a \$3 million bond issue to restore the Welcome Arnold Building in Cranston to a first-rate office complex which complements the renovations to the Center General Building that are underway for the Department of Labor and Training. This new Center on Aging facility will house not only the department's personnel and programs but will provide space for meetings and conferences for our senior citizens. In addition, the building will be wired for the latest technology in voice and data communications.

I am also including in my operating budget an additional \$250,000 to fund an elder information system beginning in the FY 1999 budget. This elder information system will greatly expand the Department of Elderly Affairs' capacity to provide timely information and referrals for its constituents. It will strengthen the Department's partnership with senior centers throughout the state and with other state agencies to enhance access, information, and linkages for seniors and their families.

Asset Protection and Capital Management

I recommend that we increase our pay-as-you.go asset protection program initiated last year to \$14 million. This additional \$5.1 million in current resources will further reduce our reliance on debt and increase our capacity to address current infrastructure needs.

I My capital budget reflects \$400.8 million of expenditures in FY 1999, including \$120.9 million of general obligation bonds for transportation, Quonset Point, education, and other statewide needs. I recommend new bond referenda to fund infrastructure needs in transportation (\$65.7 million), Higher Education Facilities (\$20.9 million), Open Space and Bike Paths (\$15 million) and the Center on Aging (\$3 million).

Further Gas Tax Transfers

I am recommending an additional 1.5 cents of the gas tax or \$6.6 million be moved from the general fund to transportation for road and highway maintenance improvement programs. The schedule of gas tax transfers that we adopted last year called for one additional cent to be transferred to DOT in FY 1999. I am recommending an additional half-cent to maintain the momentum started last year for expansion of road maintenance programs. The debt schedule that we must manage increases DOT debt service requirements in FY 1999. As a result, I wanted to meet those increased debt service costs and still provide new funds for new road maintenance programs. I am recommending for the first time in many years that an additional cent of gas tax funds be transferred to support RIPTA's ongoing operating expenses. This will increase RIPTA's share of the gas tax from 3 cents to 4 cents or an additional \$4.4 million to support operating costs in FY 1999. RIPTA's programs are an integral piece of our economy and a key link in our Family Independence Act and welfare reform initiatives.

Economic Development and Technology

I am recommending that we fund \$1 million for the Centers for Excellence Program and \$2 million for the Slater Technology Fund.

I am proposing an additional \$2 million for state government to invest in new technologies and to address the Year 2000 computer Issues. This \$2 million is in addition to the funds contained in the base operating budgets of state government as outlined in the technology supplement section of the budget.

I have included \$1.4 million in FY 1999 in the higher education budget to fund the debt service costs related to the technologies initiative approved by the voters in the last bond referendum.

Local Aid

In addition to the property tax relief program that I proposed:

I am recommending that the PILOT Program be expanded to include Green State Airport in Warwick in the list of tax exempt properties eligible for payments in lieu of taxes. This amounts to an additional \$769,000 in aid to the City of Warwick. The total PILOT program is increasing 15.3% from \$14.4 million to \$16.6 million.

I am recommending that the General Revenue Sharing program increase by \$972,500 from \$13.75 million to \$14.72 million.

I The Distressed Communities Relief Program is funded at \$6, 162,500.

I am recommending that State Education Aid to Cities and Towns increase by \$15.6 million over the FY 1998 revised budget. Included within this amount is an increase of \$14.1 million for four of the six "Student Investment Initiatives". The four initiative increases include \$5.9 million of Core Instruction Equity, \$6.2 million for Student Equity, \$1 million for Early Childhood, and \$1 million for Professional Development.

I am recommending an additional \$200,000 in the 1999 budget to fund the expansion of the student assessment program which will cover all grade 10 students in the state.

I am also proposing that an additional \$225,000 be added to expand our support for the COZ (Child Opportunity Zone) program.

I believe that my Administration's efforts to rebuild Rhode Island's future and invest in our future is already paying dividends. The FY 1999 budget recommendations build on my previous budgets and continue that investment program which enables us to achieve a better quality of life and a better economy for all Rhode Islanders. I urge you to work with me and my administration to deliver the programs we collectively believe are what is right for Rhode Island. I am proud to say that Rhode Island is truly on a roll.

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

Thank you for stopping by!

