

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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 three.

Volume 130, No.12 Tuesday, February 4, 2003 Twelfth Day

The Senate meets pursuant to adjournment and is called to order by the Honorable William V. Irons, President of the Senate, at 5:09 o'clock P.M.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 38 Senators present and 0 Senators absent as follows:

PRESENT - 38:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algiere, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McBurney, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

ABSENT - 0.

INVOCATION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents Senator Breene, to deliver the invocation.

(See Appendix for Invocation)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF RECORD

The Senate Journal of Thursday, January 30, 2003 proceedings is read in part.

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

GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Parella, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber Jean

Lehane, a student attending Salve Regina University, who will be serving as an intern this year.

Upon suggestion of Senator Polisena, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the American Heart Association Northeast Affiliate: Miriam Plitt, Chair-Elect, Rhode Island State Board of Directors; Chip Sugrue, Executive Vice President; Matthew Bannister, Senior Vice President of Communications; Nancy Thomas, Director of News Media Relations; and Nicholas Oliver, State Director of Advocacy.

Upon suggestion of Senator Algieri, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber Kent Stepanishen, a student attending the University of Rhode Island who will be serving as an intern this year.

Upon suggestion of Senators Algieri and Roberts, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the Honorable Stephen Laffey, Mayor of the city of Cranston, and Karen Grande, Bond Counsel.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable President presents the following communication from His Excellency, the Governor, transmitting the following appointments and requesting the advice and consent of the Senate thereto:

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, PROVIDENCE

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

January 29, 2003

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section 23-19-6 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following reappointment to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation:

Kenneth Aurecchia of Johnston
(Johnston Resident Representative)

for a term expiring July 1, 2005.

To this appointment, I respectfully request your advice and consent.

Sincerely,

DONALD L. CARCIERI
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

Also:

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, PROVIDENCE

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

January 30, 2003

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section 23-27.3-100.1.4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following reappointment to the State Building Codes Standards Committee:

Donald Gagnon of Woonsocket
(Representing Minimum Housing Inspectors)

for a term expiring May 1, 2005.

To this appointment, I respectfully request your advice and consent.

Sincerely,

DONALD L. CARCIERI
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, PROVIDENCE**

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

January 31, 2003

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section 16-61-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following reappointment to the Rhode Island Public Telecommunications Authority:

Sheldon Sollosy of Cranston

for a term expiring January 31, 2006.

To this appointment, I respectfully request your advice and consent.

Sincerely,

DONALD L. CARCIERI
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Financial Services, Technology and Regulatory Issues.

NEW BUSINESS

Senators Alves and Raptakis present (03-S 213) An Act relating to taxation - property subject to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government.

Senators McCaffrey, Issa, Alves and DaPonte present (03-S 214) An Act relating to commercial law - general regulatory provisions - truth in lending and retail selling.

Read and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government.

Senator Breene presents (03-S 215) An Act relating to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government.

Senators Alves, Lanzi, Goodwin and DaPonte present (03-S 216) An Act relating to education - charter public schools.

Read and referred to the Committee on Education.

Senators Alves, Walaska, Felag, Paiva Weed, Goodwin and Ruggerio present (03-S 217) An Act relating to education - the Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative.

Read and referred to the Committee on Education.

Senator Breene presents (03-S 218) An Act authorizing the formation of a regional school district representing the towns of Exeter and West Greenwich.

Read and referred to the Committee on Education.

Senators Ciccone, Lanzi, Pichardo, Ruggerio and Tassoni present (03-S 219) An Act relating to education.

Read and referred to the Committee on Education.

Senators Sosnowski, Breene and Blais present (03-S 220) An Act relating to property.

Read and referred to the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

Senators Walaska, Bates, Raptakis, McCaffrey and Gallo present (03-S 221) An Act relating to waters and navigation - oil spill prevention, administration and response fund.

Read and referred to the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

Senators Alves, Walaska, Pichardo, McCaffrey and DaPonte present (03-S 222) An Act relating to medical assistance - rates of payment to nursing facilities.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Connors, Pichardo, Perry, Paiva Weed and Goodwin present (03-S 223) An Act relating to Human Services.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Alves, Breene, Ruggerio and Felag present (03-S 224) An Act relating to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Issa, Gallo, McCaffrey, Damiani and Alves present (03-S 225) An Act relating to public officers and employees - retirement system - contributions and benefits.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Breene presents (03-S 226) An Act relating to taxation - property subject to taxation.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Polisena, Bates and Roberts present (03-S 227) An Act relating to medical assistance.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Breene, Algiere, Blais, Sosnowski and Damiani present (03-S 228) An Act relating to cities and towns - payments to fire companies.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators Breene, Blais, Gibbs and Sosnowski present (03-S 229) An Act relating to sales tax exemption.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Breene presents (03-S 230) An Act providing for the construction of additional classrooms, remodeling required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, construction of an administrative office building, and equipping and furnishing thereof, by the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District and authorizing the financing thereof, including the issue of not more than \$1,600,000 bonds therefor.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senators DaPonte, Walaska, Alves, Caprio and Felag present (03-S 231) An Act establishing the State Department of Information Technology.

Read and referred to the Committee on Financial Services, Technology and Regulatory Issues.

Senators Alves and Ruggerio present (03-S 232) An Act relating to education.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services.

Senators Connors, DaPonte, Goodwin and Ruggerio present (03-S 233) An Act relating to health and safety - refuse disposal.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services.

Senators DaPonte, Paiva Weed, Sosnowski, Connors and Polisena present (03-S 234) An Act relating to health and safety - cathode ray tube control.

Read and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services.

Senators Alves, Walaska, Goodwin, McCaffrey and Celona present (03-S 235) An Act relating to health and safety - Fetal Protection Act.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senators Paiva Weed, Connors, Lenihan, McCaffrey and Perry present (03-S 236) An Act relating to state affairs and government - lobbying of state employees.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senator Walaska presents (03-S 237) An Act relating to towns and cities - zoning ordinances.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senators Walaska, Polisena, Cote, Bates and Ciccone present (03-S 238) An Act relating to motor and other vehicles - establishing a standard for greater security in issuing Rhode Island driver's licenses and identification.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senators Cote and Walaska present (by request) (03-S 239) An Act relating to courts - joint and several liability.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senators McCaffrey, Felag and DaPonte present (03-S 240) An Act relating to boats - title.

Read and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Senator Badeau presents (03-S 241) An Act relating to businesses and professions - electricians.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

Senator Badeau presents (03-S 242) An Act relating to workers' compensation - benefits.

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.

CALENDAR

In order for the day is taken up as follows:

1. (03-S108) An Act relating to taxation - special housing exemption - Lincoln.

Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government recommends passage.

Upon suggestion of Senator Connors, and without objection, ordered to be placed on the Calendar for Thursday, February 6, 2003.

2. (03-S109) An Act relating to taxation - property tax exemption.

Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government recommends passage.

Senator Celona moves passage, seconded by Senators Tassoni, Felag, Blais and Connors.

The act is read and passed, by unanimous consent, upon a roll call vote with 38 Senators voting in the affirmative and 0 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 38:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McBurney, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

3. (03-S111) An Act authorizing the town of Jamestown to finance the installation, expansion, construction and improvement of sewers, storm drains, pumping stations and sewage treatment and disposal facilities, to issue not more than \$2,000,000 bonds and notes therefor and to impose additional sewer service charges under Chapter 233 of the Public Laws of 1973, as amended, to pay the principal and interest on such bonds and notes.

Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government recommends passage.

Senator Paiva Weed moves passage, seconded by Senators Celona and Ruggerio.

The act is read and passed, by unanimous consent, upon a roll call vote with 38 Senators voting in the affirmative and 0 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 38:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McBurney, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

4. (03-S112) An Act relating to taxation - town of Jamestown.

Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government recommends passage.

Senator Paiva Weed moves passage, seconded by Senator Celona.

The act is read and passed, by unanimous consent, upon a roll call vote with 38 Senators voting in the affirmative and 0 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 38:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McBurney, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

5. (03-S96) (Substitute "A" as amended) An Act relating to towns and cities - qualified bonds.

Committee on Finance recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute "A" as amended.

Senator Alves moves passage, seconded by Senators Paiva Weed, Roberts, Gallo, Lanzi and others.

Senators Roberts and Sheehan discuss the act.

The bill marked Substitute "A" is read and passed, as amended, and the original bill indefinitely postponed, by unanimous consent, upon a roll call vote with 38 Senators voting in the affirmative and 0 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 38:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McBurney, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

**FROM THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

A message from the House of Representatives transmits with announcement of passage:

(03-H 5088) (Substitute "A") An Act relating to towns and cities - qualified bonds.

Senator Alves requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

Upon motion of Senator Alves, seconded by Senators Felag, Roberts, Paiva Weed and Lanzi, and by unanimous consent, read and passed, in concurrence, upon a roll call vote with 35 Senators voting in the affirmative and 0 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 35:

The Honorable President Irons and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Caprio, Celona, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, Damiani, DaPonte, Felag, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Lanzi, Lenihan, McCaffrey, Montalbano, Paiva Weed, Parella, Perry, Pichardo, Polisena, Raptakis, Revens, Roberts, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Lenihan announces that the Committee on Oversight will meet on Wednesday, at 4:45 o'clock P.M. in Room 313 of the State House.

Also:

Senator Roberts announces that the Committee on Health and Human Services will meet on Wednesday, at the rise of the Senate in Room 212 of the State House.

Also:

Senator Goodwin announces that the Committee on Constitutional and Gaming Issues will meet on Wednesday, at the

rise of the Senate in Room 211 of the State House.

Also:

Senator Bates announces that the Committee on Financial Services, Technology and Regulatory Issues will meet on Wednesday, at the rise of the Senate in the Senate Lounge of the State House.

Also:

Senator Perry announces that the Committee on Judiciary will meet on Thursday, at the rise of the Senate in the Room 313 of the State House.

Also:

Senator Issa announces that the Committee on Education will meet on Thursday, at the rise of the Senate in Room 212 of the State House.

TRANSMITTAL

By unanimous consent, all matters on the Clerk's desk are ordered to be transmitted to His Excellency, the Governor or to the Honorable House of Representatives forthwith.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Ruggerio, seconded by Senator Algieri, the Senate adjourns at 6:40 o'clock P.M.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix

INVOCATION

SENATOR KEVIN A. BREENE

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Almighty Father, let your spirit of wisdom transcend upon the leaders of our State. Tonight, as our Governor delivers his annual message, we look to you to guide his heart and the hearts of all the members of this legislature as we strive to work for justice and equality for all the citizens of Rhode Island. Amen.

Appendix

CALENDAR

In order for Thursday, February 6, 2003:

1. (03-S108) An Act relating to taxation - special housing exemption - Lincoln.

Committee on Commerce, Housing and Municipal Government recommends passage.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.

Secretary of the Senate

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

PROCEEDINGS IN JOINT SESSION

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

The Honorable

President of the Senate, William V. Irons, in the Chair.

CALLED TO ORDER

The Joint Session is called to order at 6:45 o'clock P.M.

Upon suggestion of the Honorable President, 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 the Honorable President, and by unanimous consent, the reading of the Resolution (03-H 5305) of invitation is dispensed with.

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, appoints Senate Majority Leader Montalbano and Senators Algieri, Pichardo, Lanzi, Gallo and Caprio, and Representatives Almeida, Montanaro, Carter, Naughton, Mumford and Scott, a Committee to escort His Excellency, the Governor, Donald L. Carcieri 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 His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, Charles J. Fogarty, the Honorable Matthew A. Brown, Secretary of State, the Honorable Patrick C. Lynch, Attorney General, and the Honorable Paul J. Tavares, General Treasurer, enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Governor's wife, Suzanne Carcieri, enters the Chamber.

AT EASE

Upon suggestion of the Honorable President, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session is declared at ease at 6:57 o'clock P.M. until the call of the chair.

CALLED TO ORDER

Joint Session is called to order at 7:00 o'clock P.M.

Joint Session attends while His Excellency, the Governor, Donald L. Carcieri, enters the Chamber.

The Honorable President presents His Excellency, the Governor, Donald L. Carcieri, to the Joint Session. The Governor delivers his first State of the State Address.

(See Appendix for Governor's Message.)

Upon suggestion of the Honorable President, and by unanimous consent, the Joint Session attends while the committee escorts His Excellency, the Governor, Donald L. Carcieri, members of the Governor's family and invited guests from the Chamber.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Speaker Murphy, seconded by Majority Leader Montalbano and House Majority Leader Fox, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session adjourns and the two Houses separate at 7:33 o'clock P.M.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

GOVERNOR DONALD L. CARCIERI

FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my fellow General Officers, members of the Judiciary, members of the General Assembly, distinguished guests, my wife, Sue, my mother, Marguerite ... my family, and my fellow Rhode Islanders.

It is an honor to stand before you tonight to offer my first "State of Our State Address."

I approach this evening mindful of the fact that we are living in a world fraught with peril and uncertainty; punctuated, tonight, by a sense of sorrow as we mourn the loss of seven of this world's brightest, boldest and most intrepid citizens. I ask you to join me in a moment of prayerful silence in memory of the talented and courageous crew of the space shuttle

"Columbia."

As a nation, we are also wondering tonight whether we are on the brink of war.

As of today, more than 15-hundred Rhode Island reservists either have been deployed or are poised for deployment abroad. It is the largest, single National Guard deployment since World War II. Sue and I have been on the tarmac and have participated in the emotional send-offs the good byes to loved ones. These men and women are brave. Their families are strong. This nation is well served.

Tonight, as a tribute to all the women and men participating in "Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Enduring Eagle", I would like to recognize the sacrifices of three Rhode Islanders who have already answered that call to duty:

First Sergeant Thomas Dolan of North Kingstown; Master Sergeant Ronald Matthews of Providence; and Lance Corporal Alan Peabody of Coventry.

Their loved ones are here tonight. They, too, are making countless sacrifices - whether as wives, parents, or children. They are shouldering many burdens. And they're doing it for our nation ... for each of us. I'd like to ask family members Johnnie Mae Matthews, Christine Dolan and Christine Peabody to stand and be recognized. We salute you and offer your families our heartfelt prayers.

Tonight, we draw our thoughts to our own State of Rhode Island. I sense new feelings of hope, optimism and opportunity wherever I go. As I said in my inaugural speech, our citizens are expecting a government that is competent, ethical, empathetic and accessible. And one that works together.

I have been governor for 28 days, 6 hours and 52 minutes. We've hit the ground running, determined to reinforce these themes. My first official Act on Day One was to issue an executive order on ethics. I will be pursuing more.

Two days later, I hosted a State House press briefing with the leadership of the General Assembly and put forward legislation calling for a Constitutional Amendment providing real separation of powers.

In the following days, we officially put to rest the idea of a container port at Quonset. We sped up deliveries of home heating oil. We opened up new facilities to shelter the homeless during the recent cold snap. We committed resources to fund affordable housing. We reached an agreement to seek a better deal for the taxpayers on video lottery terminal proceeds.

We reorganized the Economic Development Corporation - changed its mission and focus. We got to work on the "Big Audit" and are putting together a forward-looking budget proposal for fiscal year 2004. We hosted our first "Open Door Thursday" session.

I christened a new generation, double-hulled barge the size of a football field built by Rhode Islanders. I am meeting with the leaders of the General Assembly weekly.

Tomorrow, I will sit and talk with students from Hope High School. So, yes, we have been busy. We have been engaged. And we have only just begun.

Tonight, I would like to share my vision for our future, my vision for making Rhode Island work better, for making Rhode Island government leaner, more forward-looking and more responsive. For building a state we can all be proud of. We have major challenges facing us. But they are manageable if we work together. Our fiscal situation is difficult, but not as bad as many other states'. Tonight, I will outline the steps that Rhode Island must take in order to flourish. It's all about choices, and we need to make tough choices.

My comments this evening will touch on four main topics: what we're doing to create good, high-paying jobs in Rhode Island. What we're doing to fix our schools. What we're doing to cut the cost of government and balance the budget. And what we're doing to run our State better!

First and foremost ... jobs.

It's a subject that's on everyone's mind. If it's not your own job that you are worried about, maybe it's your spouse's job, or you're worried about future opportunities for your children or your grandchildren. In order to make Rhode Island the "jewel of New England," we must provide our citizens with real job opportunities.

We must do what we've never done before: set ambitious goals for job growth and challenge ourselves to meet them. Until recently, our job growth has consistently lagged our neighbors.

Tonight, I am setting a goal: we will make Rhode Island a leader in job growth in New England.

Our goal is to create 20-thousand good jobs in the next four years. I believe in setting ambitious goals. It will focus all of our attention.

We will march forward with new and different uses for Quonset, like focusing on technology and marine trades. We'll make Quonset a recreational destination, too, maybe with a waterfront esplanade and bike paths.

And we will work aggressively to help our local communities generate local jobs. That's key. Partnering with you, and with the leaders of the communities you represent.

We must build partnerships with world-renowned entrepreneurs and scientists already in Rhode Island. We are seeing a growing number of biomedical research companies putting down roots here in the Ocean State - drawing from the intellectual strength of our colleges, hospitals and medical school.

Let me mention one success story: Epivax. A locally owned company, based in Providence. They are developing a vaccine to treat and ultimately prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. Doctor Anne DeGroot founded Epivax while working at Brown University. It's an example of how we can move ideas from the research lab to the commercial marketplace. We need more pioneers like Doctor DeGroot.

Doctor ... would you please stand and be recognized?

To leverage the power of our intellectual capital, I am proposing several targeted initiatives that will help us broaden and grow the economy.

First, we need to double our investment in our business incubators. We call them our Slater Centers. Right now, we have four such centers each focusing on an area where Rhode Island has a competitive advantage. The \$7 million that's been invested thus far has generated more than \$100 million in private investment and nearly 300 jobs. Epivax is just one example of how planting the right seeds can yield an abundant harvest.

Secondly, to further nurture the industries of tomorrow, I am proposing that we invest in research and development at the University of Rhode Island. Rhode Island ranks dead last in the nation in research and development dollars expended by our public schools of higher education. We need to change that. I am proposing that we build a new Center for Biotechnology and Molecular Biosciences at URI. Such a Center will attract world experts and businesses, alike. Folks who will bring high quality jobs with them.

By the way, we must also change our rules to allow professors more freedom to commercialize their inventions.

Thirdly, I am proposing that we dramatically increase our investment in worker training programs. We have a relatively new biotech company in this state, Amgen, located in West Greenwich, right off Route 95. Amgen is investing one billion dollars in Rhode Island. One billion dollars. They need workers. Skilled workers. And Rhode Islanders need jobs ... good jobs. There's a gap there. We need to help Amgen, and companies like them, fill that gap. We will create a world-class biotech training facility to provide the skilled workers.

The State of Rhode Island will furnish the seed money to get this project off the ground. We will send a strong message to biotech firms across the globe that Rhode Island is ready to supply the talented workforce that 21st century companies demand. I want to take this opportunity to recognize the work of Lt. Governor Fogarty, Senate President Irons, and many others who have been advancing this project.

Simply put: what we intend to do is crank up our economic development efforts, turn the ideas emanating from our colleges and universities into jobs, and train our workforce to fill those jobs. But that's only part of the equation. We need to give our children the tools to prepare for the adult world and those good jobs.

How?

By motivating and helping our young people experience success in their schools. I am committed to raising the achievement of our low-performing schools. We will begin by implementing a cutting-edge high school redesign program at Hope High School. By separating schools into smaller clusters, we will ensure that each youngster receives the individual attention she or he needs. We will inspire our young people to excel in the classroom and achieve their goals. I'd like to share an example.

Joining us tonight is Christine Auxier. Christine has taught in the Theater Department at Hope for 11 years. She has been gifted with a special ability to ignite passion and excellence in her students. Christine is accompanied by one of her students, Larinda Baker. Larinda is a star! Under the guidance and encouragement of a caring teacher, Larinda has risen to the pinnacle: traveling abroad, performing in an internationally acclaimed theater festival, and achieving the highest of scholastic honors. This is the kind of success we need to encourage. Won't you join me in recognizing the accomplishments of Christine Auxier and Larinda Baker.

I would also like to recognize the entire Hope High team, led by Providence Mayor David Cicilline, Superintendent Malody Johnson, Principal Nancy Mullen and, most importantly, the teachers at Hope High School. Hope's future success will pave the way for redesigning schools throughout Rhode Island.

Essential to this task is supporting our teachers. Teaching is an honorable and noble profession. My father, Nick, was a high school teacher and coach for 38 years. He changed lives. We have to give our teachers the training, resources, and environment they need to teach. A lot has changed in the classroom over the years.

Many of our children are exposed to life in its harshest and rawest form. But that doesn't change the basic learning needs. In order to create a better environment for our teachers, we must give our principals the training and authority to manage their schools. And we must engage the parents and community. I will be recommending that the Department of Education increase its funding of both teacher professional development and principal training programs.

You may be surprised to learn that Rhode Island has a high rate of adult illiteracy. It's heartbreaking. The waiting list at some literacy centers reaches into the thousands. I am proposing to increase our investment in adult literacy training. By helping Rhode Islanders acquire the skills to fill out a job application or read the directions on a medicine bottle, we also widen the pool of talent to staff the businesses of tomorrow.

The ever-rising cost of higher education is putting "the dream" out of reach for many of our youngsters. My wife and I were both able to go to college because of the state's scholarship aid program. That program, regrettably, has been allowed to wither. Tonight, I am proposing that we double our state support for scholarship grants.

At this point, you may be wondering how can I be talking about investing when we've got such major budget problems? As I mentioned earlier, it's all about choices. Our future success depends upon the choices we make today. We must be willing to redirect the money we are already spending. One of the major problems we face is that the cost of staffing state government is too high. Recognizing this reality is not meant to diminish the good and honest contributions of state employees who work hard. In fact, I would like to take a moment tonight and thank our state employees for their commitment and dedication.

In the budget I will be submitting shortly, we are avoiding layoffs and preserving social service programs. However,

that will necessitate adjustments to the spiraling costs of our benefit programs. At the same time, we need to undertake a comprehensive review of our State's organization. To reduce our real cost of government, we must redesign it.

I am announcing tonight that we are formulating a project to begin this task, the crucial phase of the "Big Audit." A steering committee will be formed with leaders of the General Assembly, labor, and Department of Administration Director Bob Higgins. This committee will provide oversight to work teams that will be composed of our state employees. I am convinced this exciting project will unleash great potential.

WE must confront these costs to close the \$200 million budget deficit that is projected for each of the next three years. Tax hikes are out of the question. We are already too heavily taxed which is inhibiting our job growth. In my budget message, I will outline our thoughts in more detail.

Creating jobs. Strengthening our schools. Wrestling our budget problems to the ground. We can only achieve these successes if we commit to working together and making the difficult choices. Rhode Islanders can take pride in the cooperative spirit that has existed in this chamber in the few short weeks we have been in office. A fresh breeze is blowing, indeed. The new General Assembly leadership and I have come together to find solutions to some early issues. For that, I thank them.

I believe we share a common vision: to build Rhode Island's image as a well run, business friendly state that cares deeply about its people and its unique quality of life. It is in that spirit that I ask all of you in this chamber tonight to demonstrate to the people that their government can work together and pass a clear and strong separation of powers bill.

We have an historic opportunity. For too long, Rhode Island has been encumbered by an outmoded system of government that was designed for a time long past. Twice in the last four years, Rhode Islanders have voted overwhelmingly to change the system and create a government designed for the 21st century.

So, my fellow Rhode Islanders, what would I like you to take away from tonight's State of the State message?

First and foremost, we're working hard, we're shaking things up, we're generating new ideas, we're building trust in government. We've heard so many encouraging things from so many of you. We are going to balance the budget and do it in a way that will not harm those who rely on our help. We're going to re-design State government to free up money so that we can provide for a brighter future. We are going to work with the cities and towns at the local level to deliver jobs and opportunities in the neighborhoods and at Quonset.

We are going to open up public records ... and I urge the General Assembly to do the same.

We're going to find a permanent solution to the issue of affordable housing.

We're going to throw our energies into tackling the rising cost of health care. Our low-income neighbors, our elderly and our working families need relief.

We're going to devote time, money and resources to cultivating industries where we have a competitive advantage.

We will see to it that all of our citizens live in dignity. We will provide safety to the hungry, the homeless and the sick.

We're going to enact separation of powers by working with this General Assembly.

And, oh yes, a couple more important things.

We're going to fix the Registry of Motor Vehicles. There is absolutely no reason in the world why we can't make things move faster there. We are going to make it possible for people to register their vehicles on-line. And, we're going to tear down the Jamestown Bridge, finally. I am putting money in next year's budget to begin that process. It's a safety hazard that the Coast Guard has repeatedly warned us about. I don't want anyone to get hurt.

In conclusion, we're investing, we reorganizing, and we're chipping away at some of our more entrenched problems. We are making progress.

We are a State with great potential. We have many assets and advantages, great natural beauty, fantastic cultural diversity, thriving arts and entertainment, outstanding universities, and a wonderful quality of life. We are poised for exciting growth opportunities. I am energized and optimistic. If we summon the courage to work together, tackle our problems and make those difficult choices, we can lay the foundation for a bright future. Now is the time to do it.

I would like to thank the members of this new General Assembly for their support. There's clearly a new cooperative spirit. We are truly blessed in the State of our State.

We are blessed by those courageous women and men serving to protect our freedom. We are blessed by the gifts of our special place. And we are blessed by the opportunity to serve as stewards and leaders. For all of that, thank you.

And may God bless Rhode Island and all of America.

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

Thank you for stopping by!

