

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 Second day of January in the year of Our Lord two thousand and seven.

Volume 134, No.1

Tuesday, January 2, 2007

First Legislative Day

In accordance with Chapter 22-3-2 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, the Honorable Senate is called to order at 3:10 o'clock P.M., by the Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed, being the senior member, in continuous service from the City of Newport, on the first Tuesday in January, A.D. 2007 (being the first Tuesday of the Month).

The Honorable Senate appoints Senator Breene, Cote, Gibbs and Pichardo to escort His Excellency, the Governor, Donald Carcieri to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senator appoints Senators Blais, Ciccone, Gallo, Goodwin, Moura and Ruggerio to escort Secretary of State A. Ralph Mollis to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senator presents the Honorable A. Ralph Mollis, Secretary of State.

As provided in Article III of the Constitution, the roll of the Senate, pursuant to Law, is read by the Honorable Secretary of State as follows:

January 2, 2007

To the Honorable Senate:

I, A. Ralph Mollis, Secretary of State, hereby certify the following list of members elected to the Senate in the General Assembly, in accordance with the certificate of election filed in this office by the Board of Elections on the seventh day of December, 2006, as provided by Section 22-3-13 of the General Laws of 1956:

1. Maryellen Goodwin
2. Juan M. Pichardo

3. Rhoda E. Perry
4. Dominick Ruggerio
5. Paul Jabour
6. Harold M. Metts
7. Frank A. Ciccone, III
8. James E. Doyle II
9. Stephen D. Alves
10. Walter S. Felag, Jr.
11. Charles J. Levesque
12. June N. Gibbs
13. M. Theresa Paiva Weed
14. Daniel DaPonte
15. John F. McBurney, III
16. Daniel J. Issa
17. Joseph A. Montalbano
18. Paul E. Moura
19. Daniel P. Connors
20. Roger R. Badeau
21. Leo R. Blais
22. John J. Tassoni, Jr.
23. Paul W. Fogarty
24. Marc A. Cote
25. Christopher B. Maselli
26. Beatrice A. Lanzi
27. Hanna M. Gallo
28. Joshua B. Miller
29. Michael J. McCaffrey
30. William A. Walaska
31. John C. Revens, Jr.
32. David E. Bates
33. Leonidas P. Raptakis
34. Kevin A. Breene
35. J. Michael Lenihan
36. James C. Sheehan
37. V. Susan Sosnowski
38. Dennis L. Algieri

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the State of Rhode Island on this second day of January, A.D. 2007.

Respectfully Yours,
A. Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

OATH

The Oath of Office is administered to the foregoing Senators-elect by the Honorable A. Ralph Mollis, Secretary of State.

ROLL

The Honorable Senator, directs the Reading Clerk, John S. Baxter, Jr., to call the roll of the body.

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 Montalbano and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, DaPonte, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Jabour, Lanzi, Lenihan, Levesque, Maselli, McBurney, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Paiva Weed, Perry, Pichardo, Raptakis, Revens, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

ABSENT – 0:

INVOCATION

The Honorable Senator, by unanimous consent, presents His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas J. Tobin, Bishop of Providence, to deliver the invocation.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

The Presentation of Colors is performed by members of the historic Kentish Guards.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem is performed by students from the Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Pawtucket.

RETIREMENT OF COLORS

The Kentish Guards retire the colors.

SPECIAL GUEST

The Honorable Senator, by unanimous consent, presents His Excellency, the Governor, to address the body.

The Governor delivers his remarks.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Senator Sosnowski, seconded by Senator Levesque, moves that the floor be open to nominations.

The motion to open nominations prevails on a voice vote.

The Honorable Senator declares that nominations for the office of President of the Senate are now in order.

Senator Walaska, nominates Senate President Joseph A. Montalbano, President of the Rhode Island Senate. The nomination is seconded by Senator Issa.

Senator Lenihan, seconded by Senator Fogarty, moves that nominations be closed.

The motion to close nominations prevails on a voice vote.

The Honorable Senator directs the Reading Clerk, to call the roll of the body.

The motion to elect Senator Montalbano as President of the Senate 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: Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, DaPonte, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Jabour, Lanzi, Lenihan, Levesque, Maselli, McBurney, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Montalbano, Moura, Paiva Weed, Perry, Pichardo, Raptakis, Revens, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

The Honorable Senator announces that Senator Montalbano has been elected President of the Rhode Island Senate for the years 2007 and 2008.

The Honorable Senator appoints Senators Badeau, Jabour, Miller, Raptakis and Sosnowski, to escort Mrs. Joseph A. Montalbano and Stephen Montalbano, to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senator appoints Senators Alves, Bates, Lanzi, Metts, McCaffrey and Tassoni, to escort the President of the Senate, Joseph A. Montalbano, to the rostrum.

The members attend.

OATH OF OFFICE

The Honorable Senator introduces the Honorable Secretary of State, A. Ralph Mollis, to administer the oath of Office to the Senate President.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

The Honorable President, Joseph A. Montalbano, addresses the members of the Senate and their special guests.

(See Appendix for Presidential Remarks)

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

Senator Perry nominates Senator John C. Revens, Jr., as President Pro Tempore of the Senate for the 2007 and 2008 Sessions. The nomination is seconded by Senator Sheehan.

The motion to elect Senator Revens as President Pro Tempore 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 Montalbano and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, DaPonte, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Jabour,

Lanzi, Lenihan, Levesque, Maselli, McBurney, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Paiva Weed, Perry, Pichardo, Raptakis, Revens, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

The Honorable President declares that nominations for the office of Secretary of the Senate are now in order.

Senator DaPonte nominates Raymond T. Hoyas, Jr., of Pawtucket, as Secretary of the Senate for the 2007 and 2008 Sessions. The nomination is seconded by Senator Doyle.

The motion to elect Raymond T. Hoyas, Jr. of Pawtucket, as Secretary of the Senate for the 2007 and 2008 Sessions 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 Montalbano and Senators Algieri, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, DaPonte, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Jabour, Lanzi, Lenihan, Levesque, Maselli, McBurney, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Paiva Weed, Perry, Pichardo, Raptakis, Revens, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

OATH

The Honorable President, administers the Oath of Office to the Secretary of the Senate-elect, Raymond T. Hoyas, Jr. of Pawtucket.

COMMUNICATION

The Honorable President presents the following communications:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Rhode Island Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Montalbano:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as Governor for the State of Rhode Island to His Excellency, Donald L. Carcieri, of the Town of East Greenwich.

Respectfully,

Patrick C. Lynch
Attorney General

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Rhode Island Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Montalbano:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as Lieutenant Governor for the State of Rhode Island to the Honorable, Elizabeth H. Roberts, of the City of Cranston.

Respectfully,

Patrick C. Lynch
Attorney General

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

SUPREME COURT OF RHODE ISLAND

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Rhode Island Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as Secretary of State for the State of Rhode Island to the Honorable A. Ralph Mollis.

Yours sincerely,

Frank J. Williams
Chief Justice

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

SUPREME COURT OF RHODE ISLAND

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Rhode Island Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as Attorney General for the State of Rhode Island to the Honorable Patrick C. Lynch.

Yours sincerely,

Frank J. Williams
Chief Justice

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

SUPREME COURT OF RHODE ISLAND

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Room 318, State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as General Treasurer for the State of Rhode Island to the Honorable Frank T. Caprio.

Your sincerely,

Frank J. Williams
Chief Justice

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AN PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
SENATE CHAMBER**

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
317 State House
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this day the oath of engagement as President of the Senate for the State of Rhode Island to the Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano.

Yours sincerely,

A. Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
SENATE CHAMBER**

January 2, 2007

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this second day of January, A.D. 2007 the oath of engagement to Raymond T. Hoyas, Jr., of Pawtucket as Secretary of the Senate for the years 2007 and 2008.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
SENATE CHAMBER**

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate
Room 318, State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear President Montalbano:

This is to inform you that the Democratic Senators elected on November 7, 2006, have organized the Democratic Caucus for the Senate's 2007-2008 term.

As part of the organizational meeting, held in the Senate Lounge at the State House on November 21, 2006, the thirty-three members of the caucus elected Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed, of the 13th Senatorial District, as the Senate Majority Leader for the 2007-2008 term.

Sincerely,
Juan M. Pichardo

Senator, District 2
Secretary, Democratic Caucus

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF THE SENATE MINORITY LEADER**

January 2, 2007

The Honorable Joseph Montalbano
President of the Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to inform you that the Senate Republican Caucus met on the 16th day of November 2007 and elected the Senate Minority Leader, the Senate Minority Whip, the Senate Minority Senior Deputy Leader and the Senate Minority Deputy Leaders. They are as follows:

Dennis L. Algieri, Senate Minority Leader
Kevin A. Breene, Senate Minority Whip
June N. Gibbs, Senate Minority Senior Deputy Leader
David E. Bates, Senate Minority Deputy Leader
Leo R. Blais, Senate Minority Deputy Leader

Respectfully yours,

Dennis L. Algiere Senate Minority Leader

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

SENATE ADDRESS

The Honorable President introduces Senate Majority Leader, M. Teresa Paiva Weed, to address the body.

Senate Majority Leader Paiva Weed addresses the members and their guests.

The Honorable President introduces Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algiere, to address the body.

Senate Minority Leader Algiere addresses the members and their guests.

INTERIM RULES

Upon suggestion of Senator Connors, seconded by Senator Felag, the Senate will adopt temporary rules, the rules under which it operated during the 2005-2006 session, pending the report of the rules committee and the adoption of a resolution embodying permanent rules for the 2007-2008 session, 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 Montalbano and Senators Algiere, Alves, Badeau, Bates, Blais, Breene, Ciccone, Connors, Cote, DaPonte, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gibbs, Goodwin, Issa, Jabour, Lanzi, Lenihan, Levesque, Maselli, McBurney, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Paiva Weed, Perry, Pichardo, Raptakis, Revens, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS - 0.

GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Levesque and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the family of Senator Paiva Weed, her parents Arthur and Maria Paiva, her nieces Megan and Andrea Soars, and her husband Mark S. Weed.

Upon suggestion of Senator McBurney and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber his daughter Mackenzie McBurney, his sons Patrick and Joseph McBurney, Roberts Kando Executive Director of Rhode Island Board of Elections, John Montalbano, the Honorable Mary Bray, President of the Pawtucket City Council and the Honorable John Barry Councilman from the City of Pawtucket.

Upon suggestion of Senator Perry and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the family of Senator Goodwin, her father, the Honorable Tom Goodwin, former State Senator, her mother Patricia Goodwin, her sister Sheila Goodwin and her fiancée Paul Connelly, her sister Maureen and husband Jeff LaRoque, with their children Mary Grace, Teresa and Jack LaRoque.

Upon suggestion of Senator Ciccone and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Maselli, his wife Joy Maselli, friend Michael Ververis and the Honorable Giovanni Conti, of the Johnston School Committee.

Upon suggestion of Senator Cote and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Lenihan, his wife Patricia, daughter Meghan, granddaughters Victoria and Bryanna and son-in-law Todd Magiera.

Upon suggestion of Senator DaPonte and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Ciccone, his father Frank A. Ciccone II, his mother Elmira Ciccone, Robert DiMaio, Peter Simone, Dan Nason, John Lynch, Cory Dottor, Ron Beaumier, Anthony Gaglione and Joseph Spremilli.

Upon suggestion of Senator DaPonte and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Ruggerio, his son Charles Ruggerio and special friend Barbara Santilli.

Upon suggestion of Senator Goodwin, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Perry, her son Alexander and his girlfriend Heather Carey and Kevin McHugh.

Upon suggestion of Senator Goodwin and Ruggerio and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the Honorable David Cicilline, Mayor of the City of Providence and the Honorable Peter Mancini, of the Providence City Council.

Upon suggestion of Senator Ruggerio and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the family of Senator Doyle, his mother-in-law Sandra Fiore, mother Joan C. Doyle, father Mayor James E. Doyle, wife Jaclyn M. Doyle and son James E. Doyle III, along with Francis Crawley and Joan Crawley.

Upon suggestion of Senator Walaska and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Issa, his wife Claire Issa, sons Jonathan and Adam Issa, along with Melissa Turrisi.

Upon suggestion of Senator Walaska and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the family of Senator McCaffrey, wife Deirdre, children Michael, Cailin, Brenna and Deirdre, his mother Ann and his father Gene, former State Representative, former State Senator and former Mayor of Warwick.

Upon suggestion of Senator Revens and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the husband of Senator Sosnowski, Michael Sosnowski.

Upon suggestion of Senators Paiva Weed and Issa, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the from Tawan Director General and Mrs. K.T. Yang.

Upon suggestion of Senators Levesque, Felag and Bates, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the Honorable President Kenneth Marshall, Bristol Town Council and John Faria, Bristol Democratic Town Committee.

Upon suggestion of Senator Levesque and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the brother of Senator Felag, Mark Felag.

Upon suggestion of Senator Sheehan and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Raptakis, his wife, Dr. Donna Raptakis and their son Nicholas Raptakis.

Upon suggestion of Senator Blais and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, Margaret Gartelman, chairwomen WGRTC and campaign manager of Senator Breene.

Upon suggestion of Senator Moura and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Metts, his wife, Dagus L. Metts, sister-in-law Deborah Tunstall, Rev. Dr. David D. Mitchell, Sr. Pastor Congdon St. Baptist Church, Deacon Honor Woodard, Jr. retired Captain-rescue Providence Fire Department.

Upon suggestion of Senator Moura and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the Honorable Mildred Morris, Chairman East Providence School Committee, father-in-law the Honorable George Castro, former State Representative.

Upon suggestion of Senator McCaffrey and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, family of Senator Walaska, his wife, Marsha Walaska, son Bill Walaska Jr. and daughter-in-law Christine Walaska.

Upon suggestion of Senator Connors and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator DaPonte, his parents, Manuel and Adrienne DaPonte, and his Fiancee Marcia Sousa.

Upon suggestion of Senator Doyle and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the Honorable John Sabitini, Administrator, Workers Compensation Court and former State Senator.

Upon suggestion of Senator Tassoni and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, his parents John and Janet Tassoni and his wife to be S. Jean Cerroni.

Upon suggestion of Senator Fogarty and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Gallo, her husband Russell Gallo, her daughters Julie and Laura, and Jonathon Forsythe .

Upon suggestion of Senator Gallo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the wife of Senator Fogarty, Nancy Fogarty.

Upon suggestion of Senator Pichardo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of Senator Miller, his spouse Nancy Miller, his son Nicholas Miller, his brother Samuel Miller, his mother Dian Reynolds, his stepfather Edwin Reynolds, and Maria Cimini.

Upon suggestion of Senator Miller and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, members of Senator Pichardo's family, spouse Janet Pichardo, son Cristian Pichardo, daughter Tiffanie Pichardo, sister Helen Pichardo, niece Jayda Pena, nephew Jeron Perry, former campaign manager Pich Chhuoen, intern Jose Rodriguez, Jason Hernandez, Antonio Tavaréz and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Foley.

Upon suggestion of Senator Ciccone and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, the family of the Senator Lanzi, her mother Rosemarie Lanzi, and daughter Sofia Lanzi.

Upon suggestion of Senator Metts and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber, Arthur V. Strother, Sr., the Honorable John Orabona, former State Senator and the Honorable George A. Castro former State Representative.

MUSICAL GUESTS

The Honorable President introduces the North Providence High School Choir to perform a musical selection.

BENEDICTION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents the Most Reverend Bernard Healey, Pastor of St. Ambrose Church, to deliver the Benediction.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Maselli, the Senate adjourns at 5:01 o'clock P.M.

RAYMOND T. HOYAS, JR.
Secretary of the Senate

APPENDIX

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS



Joseph A. Montalbano
President of the Senate

Governor Carcieri, Secretary of State Mollis, Bishop Tobin, Father Healey, distinguished guests, family and friends: welcome.

Majority Leader Paiva Weed, Minority Leader Algieri and all of my dear colleagues: thank you for once again placing your trust in me. The honor is made all the more humbling for me because of the tremendous regard that I have for all of you.

John Quincy Adams once said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

I think his words describe every member of this chamber. You are the public servants who have provided, and will continue to provide, direction and leadership to move this state forward.

To be selected by you, my colleagues, for whom I have so much admiration, to serve as your Senate President, is truly a moving, humbling experience. Let me say: it doesn't get old. Your show of support is still overwhelming to me, and I pledge that I will never take for granted the trust you have placed in me. The doors of this leadership team remain open for each and every member of this Chamber, and we will continue to work with you to address your priorities.

Our jobs as leaders in the Senate is made easier because of the dedicated team of public servants with whom we are blessed to work each day. Working together, we have made historic accomplishments on behalf of the people we serve, the people of Rhode Island.

This Chamber has been in the forefront on issues such as housing, tougher drunk driving laws, banning smoking in public places, and protecting children from lead poisoning, to name just a few instances in which the Senate provided the leadership needed for change. All of the dedicated and hardworking members of the Senate deserve credit for the many, many ways in which we have moved Rhode Island forward.

The past three years, during which I have been honored to serve as President of the Senate, have been very productive.

- We took many steps to address the crushing property tax burden many Rhode Islanders bear. Over the past three years, state aid to cities and towns has increased by \$123 million, so that it now stands at over a billion dollars. Meals tax revenue has been directed back to cities and towns, providing \$17 million annually in property tax relief. The car tax phase out has been accelerated. And most significantly, Leader Paiva Weed's property tax relief act of last year imposes much stricter limits on the tax levies cities and towns can generate. We will continue looking at the impact of the legislation this year, and we will continue looking for ways to ease the property tax burden Rhode Islanders bear.
- We reformed our energy policy into a national model. Last year's landmark legislation positions Rhode Island to make smarter energy purchases, and helps keep costs to consumers as low as possible, well into the future. It provides assistance for low-income families. It promotes renewable energy development, and focuses on conservation. In fact, a new coalition of business and environmental groups was formed specifically to support the Act.
- We created thousands of jobs through initiatives such as the Jobs Growth Act, the Biotechnology Jobs Growth Act, the Film and Television Tax Credit, and investments in research and development, among many other initiatives. Our commitment to growing jobs in Rhode Island remains strong. Economic development is not a partisan issue, and we will continue working closely with the Economic Development Corporation and the House to provide real job growth in Rhode Island.
- We took many steps, some very dramatic, to improve health care in Rhode Island. We created the office of Health Insurance Commissioner, and improved health care affordability, accessibility and accountability through the Health Care Reform Act of 2004. We improved protections of nursing home residents through the landmark Long-Term Care Reform Act of 2005. Last year, we focused on affordability for small businesses, and that effort will continue through this session.
- We overhauled the way in which we monitor and protect Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island's rivers and watersheds, making Rhode Island the first state in the nation to comply with the recommendations of the federal Oceans Commission.
- We settled a redistricting suit to increase minority-voting strength in Providence. To do that required the sacrifice of nine of our colleagues as well as myself, who saw the shape of their districts change for the second time in as many election cycles. The result is the doubling of minority representation in the Senate.

The accomplishments have been many – too many to list here today. We fill the pages of a yearbook every year with the many advances we have made. It would be nice to see this featured in a more public way on the air and in our newspapers, but that is not what motivates us.

What is clear is that all of these accomplishments are possible because of the commitment, vision and leadership of the members of this institution. This chamber is filled with unselfish individuals who enthusiastically dedicate themselves to achieving a positive result for the people of Rhode Island, and I have been proud to work with each of you towards that end.

And in taking the oath today, I am reminded of the incredible talent and the incredible dedication of our truly professional Senate staff. Among the finest is my best friend since the first grade, Bill Carnes. One of his many talents is creative writing with a flair. He wrote a backup oath of office for me in case I needed it today. It goes like this:

SO HELP ME GOD, I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR -
TO LEAD THIS GREAT CHAMBER IN A WAY THAT IS FAIR.

I WILL HUFF AND I'LL PUFF, BUT I NEVER WILL BEG,
SO DON'T LET ME GET CORNERED BY KATHERINE GREGG

AND IF THINGS GO ALL WRONG AND I'M FEELIN' THE BLUES,
I'LL JUST BLAME IT ALL ON R. DAVID CRUISE

THEN I'LL CALL OUT FOR LYNNE AND CHARLOTTE & TRACE,
BEFORE THE DAY'S DONE THEY'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE FACE

WE'LL ZIG AND WE'LL ZAG AND WE'LL DANCE JUST A BIT
'CAUSE THEY SAY A MOVIN' TARGET IS QUITE HARD TO HIT

AND JUST ONE FINAL NOTE, I LEAVE YOU ALL WITH THIS THEME –
WE CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS IF WE ALL WORK AS A TEAM

Here in the Senate I believe the greatest accolade is that we work as a team. Our Democratic colleagues work together as a team. Our Republican Senate colleagues, led by my friend and colleague, Minority Leader Dennis Algiere, work with us as a team. Our Senate staff work together as a team.

And we have developed a team relationship with our colleagues in the House, led by Speaker Bill Murphy and Majority Leader Gordon Fox. We have a common goal: to serve our constituents, the people of Rhode Island, to the best of our God-given talent and ability.

Today, Bill Murphy and I attended the Governor's inauguration, and he invited us, inspired by the words of our late great President Gerald Ford on the occasion of his inauguration, to work together for the good of the people of the State of Rhode Island.

Now that the election is over, we should put politics aside. The Senate accepts your invitation, Governor Carcieri. And we invite you to join the team. Together, we can and we must succeed. Our constituents demand it. They deserve nothing less.

The 2007 session presents no shortage of challenges that need to be addressed. I look forward to working together with you to meet those challenges.

We will not always agree – but that is the nature of this deliberative body. We have been fortunate in the Senate to maintain an atmosphere in which differing viewpoints can be expressed respectfully.

During the campaign, I talked around the State about a concept I call "Senate Pride." It was a label I use to describe the many talents of our most recent members who have left the Senate and who will no doubt continue to inspire us with their public service:

- Lieutenant governor Elizabeth Roberts
- General Treasurer Frank Caprio
- Mayor Joseph Polisena
- Senator Michael Damiani

Today, we are joined by four new members: Senator Paul Jabour and Senator Paul Moura, who have served previously in the House of Representatives, and Senator Christopher Maselli and Senator Joshua Miller. Welcome to the Senate. Congratulations to you. You are joining one of the state's greatest institutions of innovation, a place where ideas are freely exchanged and the foundation for progress is laid.

Congratulations also to the returning members of the Senate. The voters in each of your districts recognized you as leaders, and they have chosen to again place their trust in you to serve as their voice in the Senate. I know that you will continue to demonstrate that you are worthy of that trust.

On a personal note, I am truly fortunate to have my right arm that never tires: Majority Leader Paiva Weed. She has been my loyal partner in leadership, a person of deep values and keen intellect. We share a deep commitment for the institution of the Senate, and admire the commitment to public service displayed daily by our colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

I am fortunate to have a great leadership team: my Whip, Dominick Ruggerio, President Pro Tempore John Revens, Dean of the Senate John McBurney, and my Chairs:

- Senator Maryellen Goodwin, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Constitutional and Regulatory Issues
- Senator Rhoda Perry, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Health and human Services
- Senator Susan Sosnowski, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture
- Senator Daniel Issa, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education
- Senator Roger Badeau, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor
- Senator Michael McCaffrey, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
- Senator Stephen Alves, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance
- Senator John Tassoni, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government
- Senator William Walaska, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Corporations
- Senator Michael Lenihan, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Oversight
- And Senator Daniel Connors, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules

Finally, on a personal note, no one has been luckier in life than I. As I take on these awesome responsibilities, I am thankful for the tremendous support of my wonderful family.

Many of you know that my mother, Joan, was truly a pioneer in the legal profession, and I was fortunate to have her as not only a great mother, but as my law partner, my inspiration, and my true friend.

My dad, Anthony, who has become an octogenarian since I was last sworn in – and trust me, he can still run circles around those of us half his age – continues to be my incredible role model, my mentor in the law and in life.

My son, Stephen, has been in the news again lately, but he can handle it. He's doing a great job, he's a great son, a good person with a great future.

I also want to recognize the love and support of my mother in law, Antonia Robert, and sister-in-law, Joan Graf, who are always there for me and keep me grounded.

And I want to send out a special message of love and heartfelt prayers from the entire Senate to my sister Kathryn McCaughey, who I know is watching us today and who truly inspires me with her courage and determination in the face of tremendous challenges she is confronted with on a daily basis in dealing with her serious illness. We look forward to having you back in this Senate chamber real soon, Kat.

Finally, what can I say about Linda, my soul mate and the love of my life? She knocked on doors with me in 1984, and people still think she's my daughter. Must be her metabolism. Not. What she really still is, is my rock. Lin, thanks for putting up with me for 25 years. I don't know how you do it.

There is much to be done, and I am anxious to begin working together with Majority Leader Paiva Weed, Minority Leader Algiere, and all of my colleagues in the Senate, as well as our colleagues in the House of Representatives and the Governor, to meet the challenges of the 2007 legislative session. I will continue to work hard to live up to the trust you have placed in me.