

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 fourth day of January in the year of Our Lord two thousand and eleven.

Volume 138, No.1

Tuesday, January 4, 2011

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 4:07 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.2011 (being the first Tuesday of the Month).

The Honorable Senate appoints Senators Lombardo, Maher, Ottiano and Picard to escort Bishop Thomas J. Tobin to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senate appoints Senators Algieri, Hodgson, Jabour, Lynch and Nesselbush to escort the Honorable Paul A. Suttell, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senate appoints Senators Bates, Ciccone, Cote, Crowley and Tassoni to escort the Honorable A. Ralph Mollis, Secretary of State, to the rostrum.

The members attend.

The Honorable Senate appoints Senators McCaffrey, O'Neill, Sheehan, Walaska to escort His Excellency, the Governor, Lincoln D. Chafee to the rostrum.

The members attend.

INVOCATION

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

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

The Presentation of Colors is performed by members of the historic Artillery Company of Newport.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem is performed by the Jamestown Community Choir.

RETIREMENT OF COLORS

The Newport Artillery Company retires the colors.

SPECIAL GUEST

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

The Governor delivers his remarks.

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 4, 2011

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 eighteenth day of November, 2010, 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. Michael J. Pinga
10. Walter S. Felag, Jr.
11. Christopher Scott Ottiano
12. Louis P. DiPalma

13. M. Theresa Paiva Weed
14. Daniel DaPonte
15. Donna M. Nesselbush
16. Elizabeth A. Crowley
17. Edward J. O'Neill
18. Frank A. DeVall Jr.
19. Bethany L. Moura
20. Roger A. Picard
21. Nicholas D. Kettle
22. John J. Tassoni, Jr.
23. Paul W. Fogarty
24. Marc A. Cote
25. Frank Lombardo III
26. Beatrice A. Lanzi
27. Hanna M. Gallo
28. Joshua B. Miller
29. Michael J. McCaffrey
30. William A. Walaska
31. Erin P. Lynch
32. David E. Bates
33. Glenford J. Shibley
34. Francis T. Maher
35. Dawson Tucker Hodgson
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 fourth day of January, A.D. 2011.

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.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Senator Goodwin, seconded by Senator DaPonte, moves that the floor be open to nominations.

The motion to open nominations prevails on a voice vote.

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

Senator Sosnowski nominates Senator Paiva Weed. The nomination is seconded by Senator DiPalma.

Senator Fogarty, seconded by Senator Pinga, 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 Paiva Weed as President of the Senate is read and passed, upon a roll call vote with 33 Senators voting in the affirmative and 5 Senators voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 33: The Honorable President Paiva Weed and Senators Algieri, Bates, Ciccone, Crowley, DaPonte, DeVall, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Goodwin, Jabour, Kettle, Lanzi, Lombardo, Lynch, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Ottiano, Perry, Picard, Pichardo, Pinga, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS – 5: Senators Cote, Hodgson, Maher, Moura, Shibley.

The Honorable Senator Paiva Weed announces that Senator Paiva Weed has been elected President of the Rhode Island Senate for the years 2011 and 2012.

OATH OF OFFICE

The Honorable Senator introduces the Honorable Paul A. Suttell, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, to administer the oath of Office to the Senate President.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

The Honorable President, Paiva Weed, 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 Gallo nominates Senator Pichardo, as President Pro Tempore of the Senate for the 2011 and 2012 Sessions. The nomination is seconded by Senator Goodwin.

The motion to elect Senator Pichardo 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 Paiva Weed and Senators Algieri, Bates, Ciccone, Cote, Crowley, DaPonte, DeVall, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Goodwin, Hodgson, Jabour, Kettle, Lanzi, Lombardo, Lynch, Maher, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Ottiano, Perry, Picard, Pichardo, Pinga, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Shibley, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS – 0:

The Honorable President Pro Tempore, Juan M. Pichardo addresses the body.

The members attend.

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 Miller nominates Joseph R. Brady of Newport as Secretary of the Senate for the 2011 and 2012 sessions. The nomination is seconded by Senator Perry.

The motion to elect Joseph R. Brady of Newport as Secretary of the Senate for the 2011 and 2012 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 Paiva Weed and Senators Algieri, Bates, Ciccone, Cote, Crowley, DaPonte, DeVall, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Goodwin, Hodgson, Jabour, Kettle, Lanzi, Lombardo, Lynch, Maher, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Ottiano, Perry, Picard, Pichardo, Pinga, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Shibley, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS – 0:

OATH

The Honorable Chief Judge Haiganush Bedrosian, administers the Oath of Office to the Secretary of the Senate-elect, Joseph R. Brady of Newport.

ELECTION OF THE READING CLERK

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

Senator Doyle nominates John S. Baxter of Pawtucket as Reading Clerk of the Senate for the 2011 and 2012 sessions. The nomination is seconded by Senator Lanzi.

The motion to elect John S. Baxter of Pawtucket as Reading Clerk of the Senate for the 2011 and 2012 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 Paiva Weed and Senators Algieri, Bates, Ciccone, Cote, Crowley, DaPonte, DeVall, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Goodwin, Hodgson, Jabour, Kettle, Lanzi, Lombardo, Lynch, Maher, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Ottiano, Perry, Picard, Pichardo, Pinga, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Shibley, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS – 0:

OATH

The Honorable Chief Judge Haiganush Bedrosian, administers the Oath of Office to the Reading Clerk of the Senate-elect, John S. Baxter of Pawtucket.

COMMUNICATION

The Honorable President presents the following communications:

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

January 4, 2011

The Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Paiva Weed:

The Republican Senators Held a caucus on November 5, 2010 to elect their leadership for the 2011-2012 legislative sessions. It is as follows:

Honorable Dennis L. Algieri, Senate Minority Leader

Honorable David E. Bates, Senate Minority Whip
Honorable Francis T. Maher, Jr., Senior Deputy Minority Leader
Honorable Dawson Hodgson, Deputy Minority Leader

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Dennis L. Algieri
SENATE MINORITY LEADER

Received and ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

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

January 4, 2011

The Honorable Senate
Senate Chamber
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

To the Honorable, the Senate:

This is to inform you that the Democratic Senators elected on November 2, 2010, have organized the Democratic Caucus for the Senate's 2011-2012 term.

As part of the organizational meeting, held in the Senate Lounge at the State House on November 10 2010, the twenty-nine members of the caucus elected Honorable Dominick Ruggerio of the 4th Senatorial District, as the Senate Majority Leader for the 2011-2012 term.

Sincerely,

James E. Doyle
Senator, District 8
Secretary, Democratic Caucus

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

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

January 4, 2011

The Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate
318 State House
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable, the Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that on this fourth day of January A.D 2011 the oath of engagement was administered as President of the Senate for the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations to the Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed.

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 4, 2011

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this fourth day of January, A.D. 2011 the oath of engagement to Joseph R. Brady of Newport as Secretary of the Senate for the years 2011 and 2012.

Respectfully yours,

Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

Also:

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

January 4, 2011

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to inform you that I administered this Fourth day of January, A.D. 2011 the oath of engagement to John S. Baxter of Pawtucket as Reading Clerk of the Senate for the years 2011 and 2012.

Respectfully yours,

Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State

Received an ordered to be placed on file.

INTERIM RULES

Upon suggestion of Senator Ruggerio seconded by Senator Algiere the Senate will adopt temporary rules, the rules under which it operated during the 2009-2010 session, pending the report of the rules committee and the adoption of a resolution embodying permanent rules for the 2011-2012 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 Paiva Weed and Senators Algiere, Bates, Ciccone, Cote, Crowley, DaPonte, DeVall, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Goodwin, Hodgson, Jabour, Kettle, Lanzi, Lombardo, Lynch, Maher, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Moura, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Ottiano, Perry, Picard, Pichardo, Pinga, Ruggerio, Sheehan, Shibley, Sosnowski, Tassoni, Walaska.

NAYS – 0:

GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Lanzi and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber former House Speaker Matthew J. Smith, Seventh Senatorial District Committee Chairman Robert J. DiMiao, Seventh Senatorial District Committee member Dan Nason, Assistant Administrator Gina Sabitoni Arekalian, wife of Senator DiPalma, Margaret DiPalma, daughters Kellie and Abbie DiPalma and friend Alex Simeone.

Upon suggestion of Senator Pichardo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber his mother, Evangelista Pichardo, wife, Janet Pichardo, sons, Cristian and Emilio Pichardo, Mayor William Lantigua from Lawrence, Massachusetts, Lorenza Ortega, Jose Zalter Advisor to President of Dominican Republic, Rafael Blanco, Tom Foley, Hector Filex and Carolina Pichardo.

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

Upon suggestion of Senator Fogarty and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Russell Gallo, husband of Senator Gallo, Ed Blanchard, Lisa Simpson, Arron Dupris, Kevin Mitchell, Joe Gasco, Brandon Greene and former State Senator John F. McBurney, III.

Upon suggestion of Senator Picard and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Lombardo, dad Frank Lombardo, Jr., wife Patricia Lombardo, son, Frank Lombardo IV and daughter Victoria Lombardo.

Upon suggestion of Senator Pinga and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Moura, mother, Susan Marabello, godmother, Isabel Oliveira, campaign manager Mark Dosdourian, friends Jazmine Soares, Marion O'Brien, Sandra Morse and Bill Perry.

Upon suggestion of Senator DiPalma and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Ottiano, wife, Bernadette Ottiano, son, Raymond Ottiano, mother and father-in-law Ben and Lorraine Beaudion, Portsmouth Town Council Member, Keith Hamilton,

Portsmouth Town Council Member and State Representative Huck Little and Portsmouth Town Council Member Frank Oliveira. Family of the Secretary of the Senate Joseph Brady, daughter Kathryn Brady, son, Joe Brady and friend Jennifer and friend Sheila Dunn.

Upon suggestion of Senator Jabour and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber friends and family of Senator O'Neill, wife, Carole O'Neill, friends Seth Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Breggia, David Ferrante, Bill Moore, John Hays and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Maresca. Friends and family of Senator Metts, wife Dayus Metts, sister-in-law, Deborah Tunstall, friends Elizabeth Carson, Wayne Montague, Bryan Evens.

Upon suggestion of Senator Lynch and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Picard, wife, Diane Picard, daughters Kristen and Caitlyn Picard. Chief Judge of the Rhode Island Family Court, Haiganush R. Bedrosian.

Upon suggestion of Senator Crowley and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Laura Lafreniere, sister Leona Lafreniere, friend, Larraine Heroux, Deputy Clerk from the City of Central Falls, Marie Swokey, friends Betty Lemieux, Kathleen Palmer and Matthew Gunnip.

Upon suggestion of Senator Walaska and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber the parents of Senator Lynch, father, John Lynch, mother, Pat Lynch.

Upon suggestion of Senator Walaska and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator McCaffrey, wife Deirdre McCaffrey, daughters Cailin and Brenna Deirdre McCaffrey, father former Mayor Gene McCaffrey and sister, Rhode Island District Court Judge Mary E. McCaffrey.

Upon suggestion of Senator Cote and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Sheehan, wife Meredith Sheehan, son Liam Sheehan, brother David Sheehan and his friend Susan Vieira, stepson Colin Davine and friend, Ryan Mulcahey.

Upon suggestion of Senator Sosnowski and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Hodgson, wife Megan Hodgson, father Richard Hodgson, mother Linda Tucker, friends Kevin McGovern and Patti Bresli Fillipo.

Upon suggestion of Senator Sheehan and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Senator Cote's wife Suzanne Cote.

Upon suggestion of Senator Perry and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Miller, Nancy Miller and Nicholas Miller and the family of Senator DeVall, Grace DeVall, Andrew DeVall and Cameron DeVall.

Upon suggestion of Senator O'Neill and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Pinga, wife Jill Pinga, daughters Nicole and Michaela Pinga, West Warwick Town Council President Angelo Padula Jr., vice president Philomena Gustafson, West Warwick Town Manager James Thomas, friend Niss Lev and family of Senator Maher, wife Kathleen Maher, son, Patrick Maher and friend Edward Nataly.

Upon suggestion of Senator Tassoni and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Doyle, father, James E. Doyle, former Mayor from the City of Pawtucket, mother Joan C. Doyle, wife Jaclyn Doyle, son James E. Doyle, III, daughter Paige Doyle and sister Kristin Doyle.

Upon suggestion of Senator Moura and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Shibley, wife Carol Shibley, sons Jesse and Kyle Shibley, father-in-law, Ken Carlson and mother-in-law, Phyllis Carlson.

Upon suggestion of Senator Doyle and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Frank and Joan Crawley, Ed and Mary Tetzner, Jim Langlois, former State Senator John F McBurney, III. Family of Senator Tassoni, wife and former Smithfield Town Councilwoman S. Jean Cerroni, daughter Jennifer Tassoni and parents John and Janet Tassoni. Family of Senator DaPonte, mother Adrienne DaPonte, brother Jason DaPonte, friend Rui Alves.

Upon suggestion of Senator Hodgson and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Sosnowski, husband Michael Sosnowski, daughter Debbie Brown and son Michael Sosnowski, Jr.

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

Upon suggestion of Senator Felag and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Felag, sister Nancy Threadgill, niece Allie Threadgill, sister Jayne Balasco, and his son Jake Felag.

Upon suggestion of Senator Miller and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Pam Bailey sister of Senator Perry.

Upon suggestion of Senator DaPonte and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber friend of Senator Doyle, Chris T. Millea.

Upon suggestion of Senator McCaffrey and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Walaska, daughter Ann Marie, granddaughters, Grace, Julia, grandson Daniel.

Upon suggestion of Senator Goodwin and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber guests of Senate President Paiva Weed, Arthur and Marie Paiva, parents, Nicole Beede, Rhode Island District Court Judge Colleen M. Hastings, Kathy Silvia, Sarah Walker and Patricia Breslin.

Upon suggestion of Senator Goodwin and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber guests of Senate Majority Leader Ruggiero, Ms. Barbara Santilli, son and daughter-in-law Charles and Jillian Ruggiero, daughter Amanda Ruggiero and fiancé PJ Fallon, sister and brother-in-law Lisa and James Aceto and Niece Christine Aceto.

Upon suggestion of Senator Goodwin and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Kevin McHugh, Kristen Silvia and Patrick Butler.

Upon suggestion of Senator Algieri and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Kettle, father Matthew Kettle, mother Michele Kettle, grandmother Margaret Kettle, grandfather, Dave Kettle, grandfather William May and Uncle Jerry May.

Upon suggestion of Senator Ruggerio and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber the family of Senator Goodwin, father, former Senator Tom Goodwin, mother Patricia Goodwin, sister and brother-in-law Sheila and Paul Connelly, sister and brother-in-law Maureen and Jeff LaRock, nieces Mary Grace and Teresa, nephew Jack, godchild Sarah Hynes and District Court Judge Raphael A. Ovalles.

Upon suggestion of Senator Jabour and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber Linda DiMario Rossi.

Upon suggestion of Senator Fogarty and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President, welcomes to the Chamber family of Senator Nesselbush, mother Marie Nesselbush, partner Ellen Borden, brother Carl Nesselbush, aunts Laurie and Chris, friends Maryellen and Al Dedda, and law partner Joseph P. Marasco.

MUSICAL GUESTS

The Honorable President introduces the Jamestown Community Choir to perform a musical selection.

BENEDICTION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents Senator Harold Metts of Providence, to deliver the Benediction.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator DeVall seconded by Senator Shibley the Senate adjourns at 5:53o'clock P.M.

JOSEPH R. BRADY
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix**INVOCATION****BISHOP THOMAS J. TOBIN**

Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation; through your goodness we have the gifts of life and love, of grace and peace. Help us always to be truly grateful for your gifts and blessings; help us to use them wisely for the glory of your name and the well-being of our brothers and sisters. Almighty God, at this time of new beginnings, and as we renew our commitment to serve, let us place our trust in you alone. Help us to remember, as the Psalmist tells us, that “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who built it; and unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep watch.” We recall too, the words of Jesus who taught us that “apart from Him we can do nothing, but that with Him all things are possible.” Lord, we ask your abundant blessing upon all those gathered here today – upon our legislators, our families and friends, and all the members of our community, especially those who have pressing material and spiritual needs in their lives. Through your divine providence, give us the good gifts of this life and of the life to come. By striving to do your will here on earth may we come someday to share your glory in heaven. All this we ask in your name on this special day, and forever and ever. Amen.

Appendix**BENEDICTION****SENATOR HAROLD M. METTS**

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance”. “Indeed I Tremble for my Country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever.” Help us O’Lord, “to inform a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity”. We must “Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.” “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.” Pride can be a dangerous thing! Help us to be humble servant leaders and to remember that it is not about us! Help us to remain positive and at our challenges as opportunities to move our state forward. Remember, We are drinking from “wells” that we did not dig. In unity of spirit help us to dig new wells for our future generations. Lord give us strength, fortitude and Civility that comes from your wisdom and grace! Help us to “Tell the truth in love and face reality with courage.” Help us O’Lord to keep a proper spiritual perspective as we deal with issues of morality and righteousness; as we endeavor to improve our educational system and business climate; in protecting the least of society; and while carrying out our constitutional responsibilities. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS



M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate

Opening Day Address
January 4, 2011

Good afternoon and thank you all.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the general officers who have joined us today:

- Governor Lincoln Chafee
- Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts
- Secretary of State Ralph Mollis
- General Treasurer Gina Raimondo
- Attorney General Peter Kilmartin

The challenges we face in 2011 require that we work together to move Rhode Island forward – and on behalf of the Senate, I want you to know that we are committed to working with each of you to make this state an even greater place in which to live and work.

Chief Justice Paul Suttell: it is an honor to have you here today to administer the oath of office.

Welcome to all of the family and friends who have joined us today, who have been so supportive through the rigors of campaigns and the demands of public service. Thank you for your encouragement ... and your patience.

To our seven new members of the Senate, congratulations and welcome. To all of my colleagues who have served in the Senate previously, congratulations and welcome back.

Susan and Lou, thank you for your very kind words; and thank you to the members of the Senate for your support. I am humbled by the honor you have bestowed upon me, and will continue to do all I can to live up to the faith you have placed in me.

Each of us has been entrusted by our constituents with a solemn responsibility to serve them with integrity and to address the state's challenges in a deliberative and thoughtful manner. Each of us in this chamber, whatever our differences in ideology, share a common goal of building a prosperous future for Rhode Island. Today we pledge to accept that responsibility.

I know that we are successful as a Senate only because of the exceptional talent, dedication and vision of each of the members of this chamber.

I am also fortunate to serve alongside tremendous partners in leadership who have demonstrated their dedication to this institution and proven that working together we can address the challenges our State faces.

Dominick Ruggerio is a dedicated senator who is fair-minded, known for his willingness to listen, and has worked for years to help his colleagues meet their objectives in his capacity as Majority Whip. In his new role as Majority Leader, I know he will excel in facilitating discussion and compromise, debate and progress. His door, and his mind, are always open. I value his partnership, and his friendship.

Dennis Algiere has served as a most distinguished and dignified Minority Leader. His insights and analysis are valued, as is his comportment as a leader who represents his Caucus strongly and respectfully. It is a true privilege to work alongside him.

The last two years have been filled with challenges. Challenges that the Senate has not shied away from. Many more lie ahead, as our economy continues to struggle both nationally and locally. I am confident that we will, as leaders, overcome these challenges as we lead our state during these difficult times.

Along with these challenges come opportunities:

- opportunities to foster job creation and build a thriving economy, while making wise investments in higher education and workforce development;
 - opportunities to establish the greatest pre-K, elementary and secondary schools in the nation, through implementation of the funding formula, new tools provided through Race To The Top, and a serious and sustained commitment among leaders in government to build quality schools;
 - opportunities to increase access to affordable, quality health care, including through prudent implementation of the health care reform act;
 - opportunities to increase the efficiency and sustainability of government, such as through smart purchasing decisions, or sharing of municipal services when possible.
-
- In 2011, we will continue to listen to Rhode Island businesses and build upon the success of the 2010 session Senate Initiative, "Making it Easy to do Business."
 - We will continue to work towards a goal of fewer students who need remedial education when transitioning from high school to college.
 - We will continue the work of the Joint Port Commission, co-chaired by Senator Walaska, which worked through 2009 and 2010 towards an objective of realizing the full potential of Rhode Island's working waterfronts.

And, while an education funding formula is in place, this year we will focus on aspects that still need to be addressed, such as categorical aid. Education Committee Chairwoman Hanna Gallo, who championed the funding formula in the Senate, will chair a commission to begin meeting this month to address such issues as the funding of vocational schools – an issue which impacts every community in the state.

The federal health care reform act requires numerous decisions on the part of the state. Access to quality health care remains unaffordable for many. Health and Human Services Committee Chairwoman Rhoda Perry and Lieutenant Governor Roberts have provided invaluable leadership on health care issues. We look forward to working with the Chafee administration to ensure the best health care outcomes for Rhode Islanders.

The financial challenges faced by our cities and towns were recently highlighted in Central Falls, but the crisis faced by Central Falls is not unique. Prudent, statewide action is needed. We must continue the pursuit of government efficiencies through shared municipal services and address pension challenges. Chairman DaPonte is the Chair of the Municipal Pension Commission which has been looking at the alternatives available, and we look forward to their findings and recommendations.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list of the challenges we will face in 2011. One of the most prominent challenges we will face is an estimated budget gap which could be as much as \$300 million which must be closed in the 2012 budget – a fact which will mean tough choices for all of us, and long nights for the members of the Finance Committee.

Over the next few weeks the Senate will be considering numerous gubernatorial appointments. The advice and consent process provides an opportunity to work with the new administration to shape departmental policy.

There are many issues that will capture media attention, however, we as a Senate must remain focused on the single issue critical to our success as a State – economic development – or simply put – jobs.

As we work to address the needs of Rhode Islanders, we always strive to do so in as open and transparent a manner as possible. To improve transparency, all floor votes will now be posted on the General Assembly website immediately.

We are working to place committee votes online in the near future, as well.

In addition, we will televise more committee hearings. The public often sees just the debate on the floor of the Senate and House, but the heart of the legislative process takes place in committees, where bills are analyzed and scrutinized, and testimony is taken from the public.

These are just some of the steps we are taking to make the legislative process more transparent, so that the public can see firsthand the depth of deliberation that goes into each issue that comes before us. It is my hope that increased transparency will build public trust in the process and in the institution.

These are difficult times in Rhode Island, as they are across the country. Working together, with each other and with our colleagues in government, as well as our partners in the private sector, we can achieve our mutual goal of a bright and prosperous future for our state.

With strength and compassion, courage and determination, we can move Rhode Island towards a brighter tomorrow and awaken in the citizens of our great state the hope embroidered in our flag and slumbering in the hearts of all Rhode Islanders.