

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 third day of January in the year of Our Lord two thousand and seventeen.

Volume 144, No.5

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

Fifth Legislative Day

The Senate meets pursuant to adjournment and is called to order by the Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed, President of the Senate, at 6:33 o'clock P.M.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 37 Senators present and 1 Senator absent as follows:

PRESENT – 37: The Honorable President Paiva Weed and Senators Algiere, Archambault, Calkin, Ciccone, Conley, Cote, Coyne, Crowley, DaPonte, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gee, Goldin, Goodwin, Jabour, Kettle, Lombardi, Lombardo, Lynch Prata, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Morgan, Nesselbush, Paolino, Pearson, Picard, Quezada, Raptakis, Ruggerio, Satchell, Seveney, Sheehan.

ABSENT – 1: Senator Sosnowski.

INVOCATION

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

(See Appendix for Invocation)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF RECORD

The Senate Journal of the Fourth Legislative Day of the 2017 proceedings is read in part.

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

GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator DiPalma and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber Jessica Rinker, Senior at Rhode Island College Majoring in Political Science who will be interning in the Senate this session.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Senator McCaffrey, from the Committee on Judiciary, reports back, with recommendation of passage of the following measure:

The Appointment of Ann C. Assumpico to the Director of Public Safety.

Read and ordered to be placed on the Senate Calendar.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Honorable President presents the following communications:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
STATE HOUSE**

January 17, 2017

Rhode Island State Senate
State House
Providence, RI 02903

To the Honorable Senate:

Pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules of the Senate Democratic Caucus, I am making the following appointments for the years 2017 and 2018:

*Senator Maryellen Goodwin
Senate Majority Whip*

*Senator Frank Lombardo, III
Deputy Majority Whip*

Sincerely,

M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate

Read and placed on file.

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
STATE HOUSE**

January 18, 2017

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

Dear President Paiva Weed:

Please be advised and let the record reflect that due to illness I will be absent from the chamber on Tuesday, January 17, 2017.

I would appreciate your recording my letter in the appropriate Senate Journal.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator V. Susan Sosnowski
Senate District 37

Read and placed on file.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNOR

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



**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO**

January 12, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section § 16-97-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following appointment to the Board of Education:

Vivian Caruolo

Council on Postsecondary Education

VICE

Michael Bernstein

For a term expiring January 31, 2020

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

Sincerely,

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Education.



**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO**

January 12, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section § 28-7-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following reappointment to the Labor Relations Board:

Scott Duhamel
Labor Representative

For a term expiring August 1, 2020

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

Sincerely,

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.



**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO**

January 12, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section § 28-7-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following reappointment to the Labor Relations Board:

Marcia Reback

Labor Representative

For a term expiring August 1, 2020

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

Sincerely,

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Read and referred to the Committee on Labor.



**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO**

January 12, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with the provisions of Section § 42-128-6 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following appointment to Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission:

Ann M. Nolan

Member who has knowledge of and has demonstrated interest in housing issues as they affect low and moderate income people

VICE

Mathies Santos (resigned)

For a term expiring January 31, 2018

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

Sincerely,

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

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

NEW BUSINESS

Senate Bill No. 12

BY Algieri

ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE
CHARTER OF AML PUBLICATIONS, INC.
{LC177/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

Senate Bill No. 13

BY Crowley

ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF FRIENDS ASSOCIATION OF PAWTUCKET INC.

{LC197/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

Senate Bill No. 14

BY Ciccone, Metts, McCaffrey, Felag

ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF HARVEST OUTREACH MINISTRY, INC.

{LC403/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

Senate Bill No. 15

BY Lombardi

ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF BALLOONS OVER R.I., INC.

{LC298/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

RECESS

Upon motion of Senator Goodwin seconded by Senator Kettle the Senate stands in recess at 6:39 o'clock P.M.

Appendix**INVOCATION****SENATOR MICHAEL J. MCCAFFREY**

Almighty Father, let your spirit of wisdom transcend upon the leaders of our State. Tonight, as our Governor delivers her State of the State Address, we look to you to guide her 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**PROCEEDINGS IN JOINT SESSION**

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

The Honorable, President of the Senate, M. Teresa Paiva Weed in the Chair.

CALLED TO ORDER

The Joint Session is called to order at 6:52 o'clock P.M.

Upon suggestion of The Honorable, President of the Senate, 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.

The Honorable, President of the Senate, by unanimous consent, appoints Senators Ruggerio, Algieri, McCaffrey, DaPonte, Nesselbush, Lombardi and Representatives Azzinaro, Diaz, Johnston, Maldonado, McEntee, Phillips to escort Her Excellency, the Governor, Gina M. Raimondo and guests to the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Honorable Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and the Members of the Judiciary enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while members of the Presidents of the Rhode Island Institutions of Higher Education enter the Chamber.

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

Joint Session attends while members of the Directors of the Executive Departments and Quasi Public Agencies enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the first gentleman of Gina M. Raimondo, Andy Moffit and son Tommy Moffit, enter the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Honorable Seth Magaziner, General Treasurer, enters the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Honorable David Cicilline, United States Representative for Rhode Island's 1st Congressional District, enters the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while the Honorable James Langevin, United States Representative for Rhode Island's 2nd Congressional District, enters the Chamber.

Joint Session attends while Her Excellency, the Governor, Gina M. Raimondo, enters the Chamber.

The Honorable, President of the Senate, presents Her Excellency, the Governor, Gina M. Raimondo, to the Joint Session.

The Governor, Gina M. Raimondo delivers her State of the State Address.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Speaker Mattiello, seconded by Senator Majority Leader Ruggerio, and by unanimous consent, Joint Session adjourns and the two Houses separate at 7:44 o'clock P.M.

Appendix**CONSENT CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2016:**

1. **2017-S 12**
 BY Algieri
 ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE
 CHARTER OF AML PUBLICATIONS, INC.

 Ordered on the Consent Calendar.
2. **2017-S 13**
 BY Crowley
 ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE
 CHARTER OF FRIENDS ASSOCIATION OF PAWTUCKET INC.

 Ordered on the Consent Calendar.
3. **2017-S 14**
 BY Ciccone
 ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE
 CHARTER OF HARVEST OUTREACH MINISTRY, INC.

 Ordered on the Consent Calendar.
4. **2017-S 15**
 BY Lombardi
 ENTITLED, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE
 CHARTER OF BALLOONS OVER R.I., INC.

 Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

Appendix

CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016:

- 1.** The Appointment of Colonel Ann C. Assumpico VICE Colonel Steven O'Donnell
 Director of Public Safety

Committee on Judiciary recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

Appendix**GOVERNOR RAIMONDO'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

Good evening.

Speaker Mattiello, Senate President Paiva Weed, and Members of the General Assembly; Our distinguished guests: our mayors and municipal leaders, our judiciary, our college presidents, members of my Cabinet: We come together this evening to continue a longstanding tradition. A tradition that puts a spotlight on the incredible and remarkable responsibility that we have as stewards of our state.

To our state employees: Thank you for all that you do every single day to serve Rhode Island.

To my family, Andy, Ceci, Tommy and my mother: Thank you for the love and support you give me every day which enables me to answer my own call to public service.

And, of course, to my fellow Rhode Islanders: Thank you for the humbling opportunity and trust you have given to me to work on your behalf.

Strong and Getting Stronger

At the end of last summer, I got an email from Cindy Strain, a mom from Lincoln.

She told me the economy has changed and she was worried her kids would have a tougher time than she did. I worry about the same thing for my own children. But she wanted for her kids what every parent wants: Opportunity.

Her son Christopher enrolled in CCRI after graduating from Lincoln High. He worked hard. But college just wasn't for him. After leaving CCRI, Christopher enrolled in, and completed, one of our manufacturing training programs. He completed the program and today, he's employed as a full time machinist with Greystone Manufacturing, a local company that added jobs last year because of our new economic development initiatives.

Cindy and Christopher are here tonight and are a reminder of the progress we've made⁴ and the promises we must keep.

As leaders in this state we have to protect the progress that we've made, and keep our promise to Rhode Islanders who ask for nothing more than an opportunity to work hard. To quote Cindy's email, we owe every Rhode Islander "a shot at a good job, a full-time job, a job with benefits, a

job that has room for advancements, and a job people can make a career out of."

My fellow Rhode Islanders, because of hardworking, gritty, determined, and talented Rhode Islanders; Because of companies that are expanding here; Because we have come together as one state to invest in ourselves, I stand here this evening with optimism, confidence and pride and say that the state of our state is getting stronger every day.

Our economy is stronger.

We've cut our unemployment rate by more than half since it reached a peak of over 11 percent in 2009. Employers across our state - many of them small, locally-owned businesses - have created thousands of jobs since I stood before you at this time last year. After years of marching uphill toward recovery, we have finally regained all the private sector jobs that were lost in the recession.

Our business climate is stronger.

Last year, we cut our unemployment insurance tax for the first time since 1992, saving employers \$30 million. We eliminated the sales tax on energy and reduced the corporate minimum tax. And it's all paying off.

For more than half a decade, the 195 land in Providence has been nothing more than dirt, a symbol of our economic challenges. But as we begin a new year - our third working together - shovels, construction and thousands of jobs are at long last on their way downtown.

Because of the hard choices we've made together and the strategic investments we've protected, businesses are finally taking a fresh look at Rhode Island. The budget I'll send you this week protects our Commerce programs for one simple reason: Because they're working.

For the first time in a very long time, world-class companies like GE and Johnson & Johnson are choosing Rhode Island as the place they want to be, the place they want to grow. Other local businesses like AT Cross, Virgin Pulse and Electric Boat have made the decision to add jobs here. I love the work I do convincing companies to come here because I believe in Rhode Island and I believe in the people of Rhode Island. These companies are lucky to be able to hire our talented people.

Our workforce is getting stronger.

Thousands of Rhode Islanders are learning new skills to compete in our growing advanced economy. I met a man, probably in his late 40s, last year in Westerly, at one of our training

programs. He pulled me aside and he said, "Governor thank you for believing you can teach an old dog new tricks." I do believe that. And I'm proud of the Rhode Islanders with the courage and determination to learn new skills in the middle of his career.

The budget I'll send to the legislature protects and expands our investment in training programs so that every Rhode Islander can compete.

Our infrastructure is stronger.

Last year, we passed the most comprehensive infrastructure program in recent history. It's no secret, that our roads and bridges are some of the worst in the country. But now, because of Rhode Works, we're fixing our highways. By the end of this year, we'll have started or completed repairs on nearly 120 bridges: a visible sign that we are rebuilding Rhode Island together. And in the process, we're putting thousands of Rhode Islanders to work in good jobs that don't require a college degree.

Our schools are getting stronger and our kids are getting a shot at a brighter future.

To set all of our students out on the right path, we've made important investments in their success. We came together two years ago to guarantee that every child is able to attend all-day kindergarten. And we've made new investments to triple the number of public Pre-K classes.

By the end of this year, Rhode Island is going to be the first state in America to offer computer science classes in every town and at every public school around the state. Not California. Not Massachusetts or New York.

But Rhode Island. We're first.

Our commitment to our environment is stronger.

Last year, we made it easier for Rhode Island homeowners and businesses to be a part of our march toward a renewable future. Tonight, I'm announcing a goal to double the number of Rhode Islanders working in the green economy by 2020. After all, we are the Ocean State. Let's all continue to work together to protect the beauty of our state for future generations, and create jobs while we're at it.

And finally, our commitment to our Veterans and military families is stronger.

For years, we had a Veterans Affairs Division with no Veterans Affairs Director. Last year, I was proud to appoint Lt. Commander Kasim Yarn. And he's gotten right to work. Under his

leadership, we've opened a new Veterans Service Center in Warwick and in less than a year, he's visited every single city and town, meeting vets in every community. Thank you to every Rhode Islander who has worn the uniform, and thank you to the military families for your sacrifices and service to the nation.

Now, while we celebrate the success and the progress and the people who make us stronger, we still face challenges.

I share everyone's frustration, especially the frustration of those who depend on government assistance, over the roll out of our new social services computer program. I've taken measures to improve accountability. Rhode Island taxpayers will not pay a penny more for this system until I am satisfied that we are getting what we paid for.

And it is with the heaviest of hearts that I come before you again this year and say there is still no challenge more urgent than our overdose crisis - a crisis that is taking our friends and family from us in every single community all across Rhode Island. Thanks to the courageous and heartbreaking advocacy from Rhode Islanders affected by this crisis - Rhode Islanders like Deborah Parents who lost her son Peter; and Barbara and Brian Goldner, who lost their son Brandon - we've increased funding for treatment and prevention, funding that I ask the legislature to approve again this year. I'll also propose funding to support recovery housing for Rhode Islanders struggling with the disease of addiction.

We are strong.

We are resilient.

We are compassionate.

And we simply cannot afford to let up.

Dignity of Work

And we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that every Rhode Islander has a chance for dignified work at a decent wage.

When I was a kid, most people earned a high school diploma and went right to work. There was a pretty simple deal back then: Finish high school. Work hard. And get a decent job to support your family. You could buy a house, take a modest vacation - maybe to one of our beaches in South County or on Block Island.

There was dignity in work. There was pride in what you built and what you made.

For too many though, that deal is now out of reach.

So let's invest in our middle class. Let's put that deal back on the table here in Rhode Island.

Minimum Wage

In 2015 we raised the minimum wage. Last year, I stood with many of you to try raise it again. And we fell short. I think we missed an opportunity - especially as workers in Connecticut and Massachusetts got a raise on January 1st.

Our commitment to working Rhode Islanders has never been stronger. And I will stand up again this year - for the third straight year - for better wages. The budget I'll submit will once again raise the minimum wage. This time to \$10.50 an hour.

No one working full time should live in poverty.

Health Care Worker Raise

The budget I will submit also includes a raise for homecare workers and the people who care for Rhode Islanders with developmental disabilities. These workers ensure that the people we love live their lives with dignity. We should make sure that we value their work.

Last year, thanks to Senate President Paiva-Weed's leadership, we gave homecare and direct care workers their first raise in nearly a decade. And I propose that we give them another raise this year. It will make us more competitive with Massachusetts and help us make sure we have the highest quality people taking care of our Rhode Island families.

Earned Sick Leave

And while we're raising wages, let's also make sure people have a fair shot by allowing them a day off if they're sick or their kid's sick. It's time to give every Rhode Islander an opportunity to earn paid leave if they're sick or if they need to care for a sick child or parent.

Our neighbors across most of New England and in states across the country - states run by Democrats and Republicans - have passed or introduced modern, common-sense paid sick leave laws. Let's do the same thing here in Rhode Island.

Manufacturing

Rhode Island has always been known for making things. We used to be the jewelry capital of the world. Everyone had a story, including my own family: My father worked at Bulova Watch Factory for 28 years.

Not long ago, forty percent of jobs here were in manufacturing. And they were good jobs.

But over the years, many of those jobs were automated. Others - like my dad's - were shipped overseas. Factories closed, and the rug was pulled out from under us.

For too many years, our state's leaders - in government and business - missed an opportunity to rebuild Rhode Island's manufacturing industry. They sat back on a simple hope that jobs like my dad's would come back; that the factories would miraculously reopen.

While the jobs may have left, and many of the factories have closed - Rhode Islanders' grit and determination and desire to work is stronger than ever, and we need to tap into it. Let's rebuild and reinvent the manufacturing industry in Rhode Island. Rhode Islanders are counting on us.

The budget I propose will include funding for a new manufacturing plan: First, we're going to invest in manufacturing initiatives for our high school students. Second, we're going to help smaller manufacturers invest in new equipment. Third, we're going to make it easier for manufacturers to train and hire Rhode Islanders.

As often as I can, I visit and talk with manufacturers and workers all across Rhode Island. Next week, I'll bring a group together to begin work on a comprehensive plan to expand our advanced manufacturing industries and position Rhode Island for success in growing industries like off shore wind and precision manufacturing.

If we commit to this together, there's no reason we can't succeed. We're already the first and only state in America with an off-shore wind farm. We have New England's fastest-growing advanced industry economy. And we've seen wages for manufacturing workers grow consistently over the last two years.

So together, let's commit to expanding and modernizing manufacturing so more Rhode Island families can make a living building things in Rhode Island again.

Money Back in Rhode Islanders' Pockets

In recent years, we've made a series of tough decisions to cut our spending and put Rhode Island on stronger footing. We restructured the pension system. We cut \$100 million in our health care costs, without cutting eligibility or reducing benefits. Because of that hard work, we are in a position to give back to our working people.

For the first time in five years, most state retirees will get a cost of living increase. We've also expanded the earned income tax credit each of the last two years. We reduced the income tax seniors pay on their social security income. Now, let's take another step.

Proposal to Cut Everyone's Car Tax by at Least 30 Percent

Let's give every Rhode Islander the car tax relief that they deserve. The budget I'll send you on Thursday will cut every Rhode Islander's car tax by at least 30 percent, putting more than \$50 million back in your pockets.

I agree with Speaker Mattiello that this should be a priority, and I look forward to working with the legislature on this important issue.

As we come together to begin this work, let's commit ourselves to reform that's fair, fiscally responsible, sustainable in the long run and provides relief for every Rhode Islander. We also must protect all the progress we are making: investing in our schools, job training, and economic development.

There is plenty of room for compromise and I'll work with anybody. Rhode Islanders want car tax relief so let's work together to get it done.

Rhode Island's Promise

As we continue to invest in Rhode Island, we need to realize that our economy has changed in ways that are causing real challenges. How we meet those challenges will determine our future.

When I was my kids' age, most jobs in Rhode Island required nothing more than a high school degree. But, for my kids and yours, that's not the case anymore. The reality is that most jobs being created now in Rhode Island will require some degree or certificate beyond a high school diploma.

Our job is to ensure that there is opportunity for every Rhode Islander who is willing to work for it. Our job is to ensure that Rhode Islanders are getting the jobs businesses are creating.

Last September, I set a goal to ensure that by 2025, at least 70 percent of Rhode Island adults have some degree or credential beyond high school. To achieve that goal, we've taken strides to make college more accessible and more affordable. We now offer the PSAT and SAT, free of charge, in every public high school. We provide student loan relief for recent graduates who live and work in Rhode Island.

PrepareRI Dual Enrollment

Last year, nearly 4,000 students were able to take college courses for free. These students earn college credits while they're still in high school, and some are able to get a full semester of college under their belt before they graduate high school.

Last spring, I met a mom from Smithfield, Catherine Rickert. She's here tonight. She pulled me aside. "Governor!" she said, "You saved my family \$50,000."

"\$50K?!?" even I was surprised. "How'd we do that?"

She said, "I have twins."

The budget I will propose expands funding for this program so more Rhode Island students can start college with a head start.

But we still have a lot of work to do. Right now, fewer than half of Rhode Islanders have a degree or credential past high school. Many of those without a degree are hardworking, determined Rhode Islanders, and college just isn't for them. And that's OK. We're going to continue to invest in training and certificate programs for them.

But too many others who want a college degree, have been denied a shot at a bright future for one simple reason: They can't afford it.

A century ago, we decided as a nation that every American had a right to free education up to 12th grade. We did that because those were the skills you needed to get a good job. But our economy has changed. And the playing field has changed. And so our promise needs to change, too. Our promise needs to change if the people of Rhode Island are going to have a real shot in the economy of the future.

Because the hardest part of college shouldn't be paying for it.

So, tonight say that we stand together and expand our Rhode Island Promise. That we ensure every young person in our state has an opportunity to compete for the good-paying jobs that we're creating. Today, I say that we take charge of our future.

Tonight, I propose that we ensure Rhode Island is the first state in America to guarantee two free years of college for every Rhode Island student at CCRI, URI or Rhode Island College. I propose that we make a promise to Rhode Islanders like Juliette Xiong, a senior at Cranston East and Vinny Florio who just got accepted to URI; and Sarah Diallo from Tolman in Pawtucket who just found out she got into RIC.

You can read the full plan at FreeCollegeRI.com.

Rhode Islanders aren't asking for special treatment. They're asking for a shot. They're asking for a chance to compete. They're asking us to protect the dignity of work during uncertain times.

Because of the tough choices we've made in recent years and the success of our economic development efforts, we can afford to do this. In fact, we can't afford not to.

Conclusion

We're up for it. Rhode Islanders are up for it. We are counting on each other to meet this challenge.

After all, that's who we are. That's what people in our state expect of us.

When we're confronted by uncertainty, we hold to our founding covenant: That there's a place here for everyone. There's a place here no matter your race, your creed, your gender, where you're from or who you love. So, let's come together as a community. Let's dig deep to find the hope and the resilience and the faith and the love that's going to allow us to keep making Rhode Island stronger.

It's on us. It's on all of us. We're counting on each other. And I'm standing with you.

Together, we'll give everyone a shot. Together, we'll strengthen our state. Together, we'll meet the challenges and build a better future for every Rhode Islander.

Together, we determine our future.

Thank you very much. God bless you. And God bless Rhode Island.