



Dominick J. Ruggerio
Senate President

Thank you, Wally and Val, for your kind words.

To all my colleagues ... I am truly grateful for your support.

Congratulations to each of you for being elected to serve in the Rhode Island Senate.

Thank you for entrusting me to continue leading this Chamber for another two years.

Serving as Senate President is an incredible honor ... and a responsibility I take seriously.

I pledge to continue working collaboratively with each of you to accomplish our goals ... to serve our constituents ... to build consensus ... and to move Rhode Island forward.

I want to take a moment to thank my family for all of their support over the years. I wouldn't be here without you.

Two years ago, at Rhode Island College's Sapinsley Hall, we convened the 2021-22 session under very different ... and very *difficult* circumstances.

I am thankful that as we embark on the 2023-2024 legislative session, our situation has improved ... and that we have returned here, to the people's house, to do the people's business.

And I am proud of the incredible progress we made last session.

Working together, we acted to improve the lives of our neighbors ... and made Rhode Island a better place.

We provided needed tax relief to Rhode Islanders struggling under the weight of inflation.

But we continue to face many challenges ... and we have unfinished business.

Our focus remains unchanged:

Ensuring every student, in every city and town, receives a quality education and a strong foundation for future success.

Ensuring every Rhode Islander can access health care ... especially the mental health resources that are needed now more than ever.

Ensuring our children inherit a cleaner, more resilient environment.

Ensuring all Rhode Island families have the opportunity to prosper.

And ensuring our small businesses can create jobs and thrive.

We will continue to strengthen and expand Rhode Island's early childhood care and education system ... including universal pre-kindergarten access.

We will undertake a much-needed review of our education funding formula to ensure resources are being distributed equitably and effectively.

We will take up the recommendations of Chairman Joshua Miller and our commission on health and human services ... to ensure these critical systems are serving our most vulnerable neighbors to the best degree possible.

We will address the mental health crisis among our children ... take action to replace all of Rhode Island's lead pipes ... and continue our work to ensure all Rhode Islanders have access to safe and affordable housing.

These are some of the challenges we can ... and will ... address together in the session that lies ahead.

Please join me in welcoming our seven new members and one returning member to the chamber ... please stand and be recognized when I call your name:

- Sen. Robert Britto
- Sen. Anthony DeLuca
- Sen. Victoria Gu
- Sen. Matthew LaMountain
- Sen. Pamela Lauria
- Sen. Mark McKenny
- Sen. Linda Ujifusa
- Sen. David Tikoian

I want to recognize and thank Michael McCaffrey, our outgoing Majority Leader, who was my right hand in leadership, and who served the Senate with great distinction. I relied on him to navigate the most difficult issues we faced.

I also want to thank Dennis Algiere for his service and friendship. He is a statesman, a gentleman, and a great public servant.

I am grateful for their leadership, and wish them every happiness as they move on to new chapters in their lives.

I am privileged and excited to welcome Ryan Pearson as the new Senate Majority Leader. Ryan is an enormously talented and incredibly hard-working individual.

Time and again, he has shown that he brings people together ... and he knows how to get results for the people of Rhode Island.

I look forward to working with him, Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin, the new Minority Leader, Jessica de le Cruz, and each and every member of this chamber, towards the betterment of our state.

With last year's elections behind us, we begin the hard work of governing.

Together, in the spirit of service and collaboration, let us find common purpose in our shared commitment to our communities ... our shared love for our state ... and our shared hope for a better future.

To my new colleagues: today is the best that it gets.

Today, we get sworn in.

Tomorrow, we get sworn at.

We are fortunate to have a great team in the Senate ... and I am humbled to once again serve as President of this chamber.

Thank you all.