

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 fifth day of January in the year of Our Lord two thousand and sixteen.

Volume 143, No.01

Tuesday, January 05, 2016

First 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 4:22 o'clock P.M.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 36 Senators present and 1 Senator absent as follows:

PRESENT – 36: The Honorable President Paiva Weed and Senators Algiere, Archambault, Ciccone, Conley, Cote, Coyne, DaPonte, DiPalma, Doyle, Felag, Fogarty, Gallo, Gee, Goldin, Goodwin, Jabour, Kettle, Lombardi, Lombardo, Lynch Prata, McCaffrey, Metts, Miller, Morgan, Nesselbush, O'Neill, Pearson, Picard, Pichardo, Raptakis, Ruggerio, Satchell, Sheehan, Sosnowski, Walaska.

ABSENT – 1: Senator Crowley.

INVOCATION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents Father Bernard A. Healey, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, to deliver the invocation.

(See Appendix for Invocation)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

SENATE PRESIDENT REMARKS

(See Appendix for Remarks)

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Resolution No. 2001****BY** Pichardo, Paiva Weed, Morgan, Lombardi, Sheehan**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION HONORING PATRICIA EUGENIA LAVAGNINO-SPINOLA FOR HER OUTSTANDING DIPLOMATIC SERVICE TO THE GUATEMALAN COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY DURING HER STAY IN RHODE ISLAND, AND WISHING HER CONTINUED SUCCESS IN HER NEW DUTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
{LC3471/1}

Senator Pichardo requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

Senator Pichardo moves passage, seconded by Senators Ruggerio, Algieri, Metts and Jabour.

The resolution is read and passed, upon a voice vote.

GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Pichardo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber the Honorable Patricia Eugenia Lavaginino-Spinola.

Upon suggestion of Senator Pichardo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable President welcomes to the Chamber Susana Esquivel, Secretary, Liliana Zuñiga, Vice-Consul, Zandra Rojas, Administrative Assistant, Marlin Rosales, Administrative Assistant, Leybi Garcia, Administrative Assistant, Mrs. America Velasquez from Central American Emergency Committee of Massachusetts, Tomas Avila, President of the Rhode Island Latino Professional Association, Sonia Saavedra, Community Outreach Coordinator for Serve RI & You Empower RI, Analia Alcolea, Founder of the Argentinian Association and Chair of the Providence Latin American Film Festival, Ron Crosson, Board Member of PIAFF.

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Bill No. 2002****BY** McCaffrey, Paiva Weed, Ruggerio, Goodwin, Miller**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS - THE GOOD SAMARITAN OVERDOSE PREVENTION ACT OF 2016 (Creates "The Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act of 2016" which would exempt from liability and provide immunity for violations of probation and/or parole to any person who administers an opioid antagonist to another person to prevent a drug overdose.)
{LC3451/1}

Read and ordered to be placed on the Calendar for Wednesday, January 6th.

TRANSMITTAL

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

(See Appendix for List)

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Goodwin seconded by Senator Kettle the Senate adjourns at 4:44 o'clock P.M.

JOSEPH R. BRADY
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix**INVOCATION****REVEREND BERNARD A. HEALEY**

Merciful and Loving God and Father, high and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, who does behold all the dwellers on earth and reign with power supreme and unrestrained over all the Kingdoms, Empires and Government; look down in mercy, we beseech You, upon the members of the Rhode Island State Senate, who turn to you for guidance and protection, desiring to be dependent only upon You.

To You they appeal for the righteousness of their cause; to You do they now look for that countenance and support, which You alone can give, Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under Your nurturing care; give them wisdom in deliberations; help them to secure justice for all, establish peace among peoples, and serves only the common good of our state and her citizens.

O God of wisdom, direct the councils of this honorable assembly; enable them to settle things on the best and surest foundation. That order, harmony and peace may be sought, and truth and justice, religion and piety, prevail and flourish amongst the people.

Preserve the health of their bodies and vigor of their minds; shower down on them and all they represent, such temporal blessings as You find expedient for them in this world and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we Ask in Your name, God of glory and majesty.

Amen.

Appendix

Address to Chamber
Opening Day Rhode Island Senate
Madam President M. Teresa Paiva Weed
January 5, 2016

My colleagues in the Senate, and the distinguished guests who have joined us today: it is my privilege to welcome you to the 2016 session of the Rhode Island Senate.

Everyone has worked hard during the summer and fall, in your districts, on special commissions, and in many other ways. We return today eager to build upon the progress we have made and address the challenges our state continues to face.

Working together in 2015, the leaders in this room helped to:

- Create a School Building Authority to fix Rhode Island's crumbling schools;
- Provide funding so that all communities can offer full-day kindergarten;
- Enact a statewide tourism initiative
- Enact the landmark Community Police Relationship Act;
- Increase the minimum wage and the minimum base wage for tipped workers;
- Enact important environmental reforms, such as the cesspool phase-out;
- Grant veterans preference for subsidized housing, because no one who served our nation in the armed forces should be sleeping on the street;
- Enact campaign finance reform;
- And much, much more.

Each member of this chamber worked diligently to improve our state, and we return today with energy and focus to continue our work.

We face no shortage of challenges. I am certain that all of us share the sentiment that our single greatest priority is the economy, and we will continue to work together with Governor Raimondo, Speaker Mattiello and our colleagues in the House to position Rhode Island for economic prosperity.

We have taken many steps in recent years to improve the state's economic competitiveness, including addressing our tax structure.

- We reformed the income tax.
- We reduced the corporate tax rate and the minimum corporate tax.
- We increased the estate tax threshold and eliminated the cliff provision.
- We removed the tax that non-manufacturing businesses had paid on heating fuels.
- Working with Governor Raimondo and Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor, last year we also put in place a package of incentives that they are using to assist existing businesses, as you read in today's paper – the expansion of Greystone in Lincoln – and to attract new companies to the state.

Slowly, the economy has improved, but the urgency with which we must continue to address our economic challenges has not diminished. We must continue to build upon the progress we have made to put Rhode Islanders back to work and position Rhode Island for long-term economic prosperity.

Rhode Island has so much going for it. We have such a strong quality of place. We have tremendous arts and culture, and a culinary scene that is second to none. We can boast about our density of exceptional colleges and universities, as well as a great location in the northeast corridor. The beauty of our beaches is unsurpassed.

These are important strengths on which to build.

The noted economist Christopher Thornberg is interviewed in this month's edition of NCSL's magazine "State Legislatures." He notes the importance of quality of life to economic development efforts.

The Senate has focused on some of the areas he points to, but these areas demand our continued attention, including the quality of our education system, and the quality of our infrastructure.

"If you make those proper investments, people will want to be there," he says. "What's languishing are long-term investments – building new schools and repairing old roads, bridges and various sorts of infrastructure."

As a state, we have worked to position ourselves competitively from a tax standpoint, but we need to continue to make the long-term investments in our people that will drive economic growth.

We hear similar sentiments all the time from business leaders. The quality of our public schools is critical to our broader economic success as a state. Students graduating from our many esteemed institutions of higher learning want to live and work in a state with quality public schools. Entrepreneurs want to locate in states where they can find a talented workforce to fill 21st century jobs ... and where they know their own children will receive a quality education.

One challenge which must be addressed this session is ensuring that the methodology by which we require our local communities to fund local schools is providing adequate resources to those in traditional and charter schools alike. Rhode Islanders deserve an education system that serves all of its students well.

Similarly, investing in our roads and bridges is a critical component of our economic wellbeing, and is essential for the safety and quality of life of Rhode Islanders. We all agree that the condition of our infrastructure is unacceptable, and I look forward to this Senate working together with the Governor and the House to make the needed investments in our roads and bridges.

While the economy continues to recover, we must also recognize that many Rhode Islanders continue to face hardships. Social services are an investment in our people, too, and we must be careful not to lose sight of the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society.

We are often reminded of the famous words of Hubert Humphrey: "It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children;

those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life – the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.”

We must continue to work collaboratively to make our state as competitive as it can be, to grow our economy and put Rhode Islanders back to work. At the same time, we should work to ensure that vital services relied upon by Rhode Islanders are maintained to assist the vulnerable, and to help those who have fallen on hard times get back on their feet.

I am fortunate to serve alongside the talented and dedicated members of this Senate.

- Dominick Ruggerio is a steady and fair-minded leader, committed to getting our economy moving again and to assisting his colleagues as we work to enact priorities on behalf of our constituents;
- Dennis Algiere is thoughtful and insightful, and he works across the aisle with grace and dignity;
- Maryellen Goodwin is an invaluable partner in our leadership team;
- The committee chairs bring expertise and dedication to their leadership duties; and
- Each and every member of this Senate works with passion – and compassion – on behalf of your communities and the people of this state.

It is an honor to serve with you all.

It is my pleasure to welcome you back this New Year. I look forward to working together during another busy and productive legislative session.

Appendix

CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 06, 2016:

- 1. 2016-S 2002**
BY McCaffrey
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS - THE GOOD
SAMARITAN OVERDOSE PREVENTION ACT OF 2016

Ordered to the Calendar.

Joseph Brady
Secretary of the Senate