

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 Seventh Day of January in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty.

Volume 147, No. 1

Tuesday, January 07, 2020

First Legislative Day

The Senate meets pursuant to adjournment and is called to order by the Honorable Dominick J. Ruggiero, President of the Senate, at 4:10 o'clock P.M.

ROLL CALL

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 Dominick Ruggiero, and Senators Algieri, Archambault, Bell, Ciccone, Conley, Coyne, Crowley, de la Cruz, DiPalma, Euer, Felag, Gallo, Goldin, Goodwin, Lawson, Lombardi, Lombardo, Lynch Prata, McCaffrey, McKenney, Metts, Miller, Morgan, Murray, Nesselbush, Paolino, Pearson, Picard, Quezada, Raptakis, Rogers, Satchell, Seveney, Sheehan, Sosnowski, and Valverde.

ABSENT – 1: Senator Cano.

INVOCATION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents the Reverend Justin R. Lester from the Congdon Street Baptist Church in Providence to deliver the invocation.

(See Appendix for Invocation)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

SENATE PRESIDENT'S OPENING DAY ADDRESS

(See Appendix for Senate President's Opening Day Address)

GUESTS

Upon the suggestion of Senators McCaffrey and Algieri and by unanimous consent, The Honorable President of the Senate, welcomes to the Chamber Hector Morel from ATR Treehouse Sound System, Peter Wood from Data Systems, Simidele Mabray from DCAMM, Chris Thomas from Drapery House, Nick Deschenes from E.F. O' Donnell & Sons, Lori Catuogno from JCLS, Virginia Hesse from the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, Alison Izzy from the State House Restoration Society, and Joe Caldeira from Vision 3 Associates.

COMMUNICATION

The Honorable President of the Senate presents the following communication:

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**Senate Chamber**

January 7, 2020

The Honorable Dominick J. Ruggerio
President of the Senate
State House, Room 318
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Ruggerio:

Please be advised and let the record reflect that I will be absent from the Chamber Tuesday, January 7, Wednesday, January 8 and Thursday, January 9, 2020.

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

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra C. Cano
Senator District #8

Read and ordered to be placed on file.

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Resolution No. 2001****BY** Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Lynch Prata, Algieri**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE JUSTICE JOSEPH F. RODGERS, JR. {LC3164/1}

Recommended for Immediate Consideration.

Senator McCaffrey requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

Senator McCaffrey moves passage, seconded by Senators Algieri, Archambault, Bell, Ciccone, Conley, Coyne, Crowley, de la Cruz, DiPalma, Euer, Felag, Gallo, Goldin, Goodwin, Lawson, Lombardi, Lombardo, Lynch Prata, McKenney, Metts, Miller, Morgan, Murray, Nesselbush, Paolino, Pearson, Picard, Quezada, Raptakis, Rogers, Satchell, Seveney, Sheehan, Sosnowski, and Valverde.

Senators Lynch Prata and Metts speak on the resolution.

The resolution is read and passed upon a rising vote.

GUESTS

Upon the suggestion of Senators McCaffrey and Algieri and by unanimous consent, The Honorable President of the Senate, welcomes to the Chamber the family of the Honorable Justice Joseph F. Rodgers, Jr., the Honorable Kristin E. Rodgers and Joseph Rodgers III.

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Resolution No. 2002****BY** Goodwin, Lynch Prata, Gallo, Euer, Sosnowski**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RHODE ISLAND'S RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT, GRANTING WOMEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE {LC3399/1}

Recommended for Immediate Consideration.

Senator Goodwin requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

Senator Goodwin moves passage, seconded by Senators Coyne, Crowley, de la Cruz, Euer, Gallo, Goldin, Lawson, Lynch Prata, Morgan, Murray, Nesselbush, Quezada, Sosnowski, Valverde, Algieri, Archambault, Bell, Ciccone, Conley, DiPalma, Felag, Lombardi, Lombardo, McCaffrey, McKenney, Metts, Miller, Paolino, Pearson, Picard, Raptakis, Rogers, Satchell, Seveney and Sheehan.

Senators Morgan, Crowley and Lynch Prata speak on the resolution.

The resolution is read and passed upon a voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Lombardi announces that the Nurse Anesthetist Association will meet today at the Marriot Downtown Providence at 5:00PM.

Senator Goodwin announces that the Senate will not meet on Thursday, January 9th and Thursday, January 16th.

Senator Goodwin announces that the Senate will meet on Tuesday, January 14th at 5pm with the Governors State of the State Address to follow in the House Chamber.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon the Motion of Senator McCaffrey seconded by Senator Goodwin, and upon the suggestion of Senator McCaffrey the Senate adjourns at 4:54 o'clock P.M., in memory of *The Honorable Justice Joseph F. Rodgers, Jr.*

ROBERT L. RICCI
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix

SENATE PRESIDENT'S OPENING DAY ADDRESS



Dominick J. Ruggerio

President of the Senate

It is a privilege and a true pleasure to welcome all of you back to the Senate as we convene the 2020 legislative session.

Today we meet in a newly renovated chamber, with a richer shade of carpet, refinished desks, and new chairs. The lettering on the state seals adorning the gallery arch are now highlighted. Less visibly, the sound system has been improved and wiring brought to code.

We are the first state in the nation to have both legislative chambers and galleries equipped with permanent large area hearing loops, which transmit sound electronically to modern hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Just as we are convening in a chamber that has been modernized and restored to its historic grandeur, it is my hope that each of you is rejuvenated as well. I look forward to working together with each of you in the coming months to address the challenges facing our state.

Education remains at the top of our agenda.

Education not only enables individuals to improve their personal circumstances in life, it also impacts every other area of our state, from social services to economic development. Companies want to locate or expand in a state where they can find a quality workforce, and entrepreneurs want to live where they can send their own children to quality schools.

We enacted significant education reforms last year. We will be monitoring the implementation of these reforms as we seek to build upon that foundation with initiatives that support students and teachers.

Among the areas we will look to improve are strengthening civics education and financial literacy, increasing funding for English Language Learners, and implementing programs to attract teachers in hard to fill areas like math, science and world languages.

Similarly, we can't grow an economy without adequate housing options at all price points. It's not possible for the population to grow if housing construction is stagnant, particularly in a place like Rhode Island, which has among the oldest housing stocks in the nation.

We need to explore ways to remove barriers to the construction of new housing and the rehabilitation of older housing.

Housing is a complex challenge, and we will look to our Housing & Municipal Government Committee, the Rules, Governmental Ethics & Oversight Committee, and the new Housing Commission, to explore ways to remove barriers to housing development and to incentivize growth.

Certainly we will need to consider additional funding to support affordable housing, such as a new bond or a permanent funding stream.

We should also look at the approach taken in other states, such as Massachusetts, which incentivizes cities and towns to increase housing through both direct payments and reimbursement of education costs.

One area that doesn't need any more study is Senator Metts' Fair Housing bill, which prohibits discrimination based on source of income, such as Section 8 vouchers. This chamber has passed the bill each of the last two years.

It is time to end housing discrimination in our state.

Another area upon which the Senate will be focused this year is prescription drug affordability.

Many of us attended workshops the AARP conducted across the state this fall. They have developed a package of proposals that we will examine, alongside additional proposals. Rhode Island's population is among the oldest in the nation, and this issue has a significant impact on them.

I know that each and every one of us also remains committed to several issues that have passed our chamber but not yet won enactment, including:

- Banning 3D printed guns and "Ghost Guns." Senator Coyne has provided strong leadership on this issue since it first emerged in 2018;
- Modernizing the Parentage Act. Chairwoman Lynch Prata worked with all stakeholders to develop carefully crafted legislation that contains legal safeguards while treating all people with dignity and respect. It is time to enact this bill;
- Enacting a strong pay equity law and sexual harassment protections in the workplace;
- Codifying the protections of the Affordable Care Act;
- Banning single-use plastic bags and reducing the use of plastic straws; and
- Improving our solar siting procedures.

These issues barely scratch the surface of what will be considered in the coming session. I'm sure it will be busy and productive, as always.

I am very fortunate to be surrounded by the most talented and dedicated group of public servants any leader could ask for. I enjoy working collaboratively with each of you ... and I want to take a moment to particularly say how grateful I am for the partnership of **Leaders Michael McCaffrey and Dennis Algiere, and Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin.**

It is by listening to each other's perspectives – by having an honest – and often robust – exchange of ideas that we rise to meet the challenges facing our state.

I am extremely proud that the members of this chamber have always found a way to work through our differences respectfully and to avoid the ideological and partisan stalemates that hold back progress elsewhere.

I look forward to working with every member of this chamber to help you achieve your goals on behalf of your constituents.

Welcome to the 2020 legislative session ... and Happy New Year.