

VICTORIA
GU
State Senate
— **District 38** —

March Updates

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Our 2024 legislative committees are in full swing. I'm including more details below on bills I'm sponsoring, co-sponsoring, and other high-profile bills.

I've linked below the recording from our February town hall on climate resiliency & our southern coast. Thank you so much to our speakers Pam Rubinoff, JP Walsh from the URI Coastal Resources Center, Bryan Oakley from Eastern CT State University, Sue Anderbois from The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island, and Topher Hamblett from Save The Bay - Narragansett Bay (please contact these organizations if you'd like to be involved in advocacy or even dune grass planting!)

For advocacy, check out the Act on Coasts bill that State Representative Tina Spears and I are sponsoring in the House and Senate this year- the Act on Coasts: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/ask-your-representatives-to-support-act-on-coasts>

Watch Town Hall on Climate Resiliency

You're invited to a gathering sponsored by the
**Democratic Town Committees
of Charlestown and Westerly**

Where: Charlestown Police Department
When: Thursday, March 7, 6:30-8:00 pm



Special Guest Liz Beretta-Perik, Chairwoman of the RI Democratic Party, will address current topics and events.

All members of both Town Committees are urged to attend. This is a perfect opportunity for us to meet, collaborate and kick off this critical 2024 election season.

Joint Democratic Town Committee Meeting

Time/Date: Thursday March 7th, 6:30-8pm

Location: Charlestown Police Department, [4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown](#)

This joint Democratic Town Committee meeting will feature the new RI Democratic Party Chair, Liz Beretta-Perik! Come to meet Liz and local Democratic Committee members, collaborate and kick off this critical 2024 election season.

Legislative Updates: LEOBOR

In late January, the Senate passed its version of the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights (LEOBOR) Reform bill. This bill changes how law enforcement officers are investigated and/or disciplined if they are accused of misconduct. The Senate held a [study commission in 2020](#) and the bill emerged from that. There is not a direct companion bill in the House yet. In fact, there are three competing House versions of the bill. The Senate bill is complex but here are some key points:

1. **According to current law, the review panel that adjudicates offenses consists of three (3) active or retired law enforcement officers:** one (1) member selected by the chief, one (1) member selected by the officer under investigation, and one (1) agreed to by the other two members or appointed by the presiding justice of the superior court if no agreement is reached
2. **The Senate bill would change the process for how officers are selected and add two non-law enforcement officers to the panel, for a total of 5 panelists:**
 - A retired supreme, superior or district court judge appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court;
 - The executive director of the Nonviolence Institute; and
 - Three law enforcement officers selected at random from a pool of officers trained and certified in police discipline. No officer shall be selected if employed by the same department of the officer or charging law enforcement agency.
3. **The Senate bill would increase the period of summary discipline** – the period of unpaid suspension that can be levied without triggering the statutory protections of LEOBOR – from two to 14 work days.
4. **The Senate bill would also add additional transparency requirements,** such as requiring public reports on LEOBOR cases.



SHORELINE ACCESS BILLS 2024

S-2185

Disclose shoreline access law and other public access conditions to buyers of oceanfront property

S-2641

Option to preserve abandoned roads as walking, biking trails

S-2634

Allow historic footpaths to be designated as rights-of-way

Representative Cortvriend and I introduced a package of shoreline access bills for 2024

I'm glad to work with State Representative Terri Cortvriend to build on the success of the shoreline access legislation last year. This year, we're focusing more on rights-of-ways. These bills will give CRMC and towns some tools to preserve access not just to the shoreline, but also to historic trails and recreational sites.

Read more about the bills here: <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/03/05/how-shoreline-access-rights-could-change-this->

[year-in-ri/72856498007/](#)

We were partly inspired by this ProJo article a few years

back: <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2022/02/25/rhode-island-public-access-historical-paths-trails/6703292001/>

What you can do: We need strong testimony to keep momentum going on shoreline access bills! You can:

- Use this form to contact your state representatives and senators: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/support-shoreline-access-bills-s-2641-s-2634-s-2185/>

- Send Senate testimony to slegislation@rilegislature.gov and include the bill number in the subject line

- Email myself or Representative Cortvriend if you'd like to testify in person; we can send you updates when the hearings are scheduled.

Take Action for Shoreline Access Bills

In the News



Senate Leaders Unveil Package of 25 Healthcare Bills

The four pillars of this bill package are:

- Consumer Protection
- Provider Availability & Care Quality
- Cost Containment
- Financial Stability of the Healthcare System

Read more here: https://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease/_layouts/15/ril.pressrelease.inputform/DisplayForm.aspx?List=c8baae31-3c10-431c-8dcd-9dbbe21ce3e9&ID=374136

Past Meetings / Events



RISD ADU Design Competition & Housing Grant Discussion in Charlestown

Left: RISD students presented some great conceptual designs for ADU's in their student competition, and I was happy to meet the winners for a press conference

and hear about their enthusiasm to help solve the housing crisis.

Right: I invited RIHousing to Charlestown Town Hall to explain to the Town Council and Affordable Housing Commission the competitive state grants that each town is eligible for, including workforce housing grants that will be announced in the coming year. Over the past several years, Rhode Island dedicated around \$300 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funds to help with site acquisition, pre-development (architecture/engineering), and development of new affordable housing.



Exciting Wins for the Westerly & Chariho High School Culinary Programs

Westerly (pictured right): I was very excited to see the new food truck that Westerly High School obtained and outfitted to complement their culinary program. The trailer was donated by the RI Department of Education under the “Menu For Success” program in which schools from around the state were allocated funding to purchase a food truck or trailer.

Chariho (pictured left): Proud of the CHARIHOftech students who won the Hotel Management portion of the RI High School Culinary Arts, Foodservice and Hotel Management Competition! It was great to see students across the state show off

their culinary skills, and thank you to all the 40+ industry professionals who volunteered their time to give the students a great learning experience and help them learn about career paths



Discussing Workforce, Housing, Renewable Energy at URI

I enjoyed discussing public-private partnership models with a University of Rhode Island Business School class last week. The students had a lot of great questions about the renewable energy sector & solutions to the housing crisis - there is so much there to tackle, but I like that the students are thinking big!



ORCA Beach Cleanup in Westerly

Really great volunteer turnout at the [Ocean Recovery Community Alliance - ORCA](#) cleanup in Westerly this past Sunday! 67 volunteers picked up 633 pounds of trash

The Nips bottles I picked up reminded me of the importance of preventing plastic from entering up in our ocean and waterways. They end up breaking down into microplastics and nanoplastics.

Another beach cleanup in our area, hosted by Save the Bay, is on March 30th, 1-3pm, at [557 Charlestown Beach Rd](#). Register here: https://volunteer.savebay.org/need/detail/?need_id=907846



February 5, 2024 Presentation on Restoring the West Breachway

Charlestown Coastal Ponds Management Commission

We heard from Steve McCandless, Charlestown GIS Coordinator, who applied for funds to initiate the reconstruction of the west wall of the Breachway, that will facilitate the dune recovery process behind the newly constructed wall over time. Charlestown recently got a grant approved from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank MRP (Municipal Resilience Program). This grant is specifically designated to mitigate coastal hazards at the Charlestown Breachway. The allocated funding is intended to restore both the Charlestown Breachway and the adjacent barrier island complex



Opiod Overdose Response Training in Westerly

We learned a lot at the Overdose Response Training held at [The United Theatre](#) this week! People can pick up Naloxone from boxes stationed in the community (for example, [68 Pierce St, Westerly](#)). To take the course online: <https://web.uri.edu/cfrp/>
Thank you Dr. Anita Jacobson of the University of Rhode Island, [Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce](#), Councilor Mary Scialabba, [Ray of Hope - End the Stigma and Shame of Addiction](#)

Upcoming Local Events / Places I'll Be

- **Mon Mar 11th:** Reading to students for Dunns Corners Middle School's Reading Week
- **Mon Mar 11th:** Attending Westerly Rotary Club
- **Wed Mar 20th 8am on WBLQ Radio Station:** My biweekly conversation with Frank Prosnitz to update folks on what's happening at the State House
- **Thur Mar 24th:** Ocean Community YMCA Breakfast to kick off fundraising for the year

- **Sat Mar 30th 1-3pm:** Save the Bay is hosting a beach cleanup at 557 Charlestown Beach Rd. Register here: https://volunteer.savebay.org/need/detail/?need_id=907846
- **Commission Meetings:** I'll continue visiting some local town commissions to keep up to date with what they're planning and share any relevant state resources. If you'd like me to join a meeting, please reach out! victoria4ri@gmail.com



From a US state public health authority >

ENROLL TODAY

Rhode Island

Special Needs Emergency Registry

For more information call
(401) 222-5960 / RI Relay 711
or visit **health.ri.gov/emregistry**

 RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Only for Rhode Island residents

Programs You Can Enroll In

[Enrolling](#) in the Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry (RISNER) lets police, fire, and other first responders in your community better prepare for and respond to your needs during a hurricane, storm, or other emergency.

Many people may need extra help during a time of emergency, including people who:

- Use life support systems such as oxygen, respirator, ventilator, dialysis, pacemaker, or who have chronic conditions and require treatment (e.g., have diabetes and require insulin);
- Have mobility needs and use a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, or other mobility device;
- Are visually impaired, blind, hard of hearing, or Deaf;

- Have speech, cognitive, developmental or behavioral health disabilities; or
- Use assistive animals or a prosthesis.

The information submitted to RISNER is shared with local and state first responders and emergency management officials. Your information is held confidentially and only accessed to assist in your safety and well-being. The Rhode Island Department of Health and [Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency](#) have worked with E-911 to notify first responders when they are responding to a household that may have someone enrolled in the Registry. While enrolling in RISNER does not guarantee assistance, this notification allows first responders additional time to consider how to best respond to that incident. Please note that strict confidentiality is maintained at all times and only those who have a reason to access the information are authorized to do so.

If you cannot complete the enrollment form yourself, a family member, caregiver, or authorized representative can complete the enrollment form on your behalf.

Enroll Yourself or a Loved One

Friends of Victoria Gu, PO Box 116, Charlestown, RI 02813, United States, 4013880696

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