

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

## **June Updates: The End of Another Legislative Year**

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On the last night of the legislative session, several Senators who were retiring spoke about their time in the Senate with a lot of heartfelt emotions. We also praised them for their commitment to their constituents, their civility, and their tenacity. For example, Senator Roger Picard, who sat next to me for the last two years and helped me learn the rules of the Senate, fought hard for his bill to amend the RI Constitution to guarantee a quality education to each student. Even if we didn't agree on some other issues, we always had a civil and honest conversation about it. Despite what's going on in national politics, I hope to continue our retiring Senators' legacy of civility and honest policy debates in Rhode Island.

Two years ago I was humbled to be elected State Senator for District 38. From shoreline access & climate adaptation, to healthcare access & education, we've made good progress, but there's so much more to do. And so this week I officially filed to run for re-election and I humbly ask for your vote and support! **Sign up to join us in early July as we gather 100 signatures to get on the ballot:** [victoria4ri.com/volunteer](https://victoria4ri.com/volunteer)

Help us get on the ballot!



## RI Legislative Updates

### Healthcare Bills

We passed a number of bills in the Senate to increase access to care, reduce costs, and protect consumers. The following have passed the General Assembly:

- RI will join five interstate licensing compacts so that healthcare providers can more easily practice in multiple states including RI

- RI will establish scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to incentivize primary care providers to come to RI after medical school
- RI will invest \$2.7 million to recruit 30 advanced primary care training sites, increasing training slots by 50% for nurse practitioners, physician assistant students, and physician residents
- Hospitals are now required to publish pricing information in two formats: a consumer-friendly list of 300 “shoppable services,” and a comprehensive machine-readable file for all items and services. Placing this sunshine requirement into statute will help people understand and reduce costs.
- The Healthcare Provider Shield Act will protect medical providers who provide transgender and reproductive health care services in Rhode Island from civil or criminal suits from other states

## Housing

- **We passed a bill to enable more homeowners to have "Accessory Dwelling Units" (ADU's, also called "in-law apartments").** It will allow most single-family/multi-family homeowners to have an ADU within the footprint of their existing house (like a walkout basement) or accessory structure (like a garage conversion). This was a top priority of AARP Rhode Island because ADU's can be designed to be fully accessible for seniors, can allow family, friends, or caregivers to live on site so that seniors can age in their community, and/or be offered for rental (not short-term rental) to supplement income.

## Public Safety

- We passed a revised version of the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights reform that fixed the language around releasing body camera footage
- We passed the Safe Storage Law, requiring that all firearms, when not in use by the owner or another authorized user, be safely stored in a locked container.

## Labor/Workforce

- We expanded Rhode Island’s Temporary Caregiver Insurance program from six weeks to eight, allowing new parents more time for parental leave and caregivers more time to care for a critically ill family member.
- We established Secure Choice, a convenient, low-cost public-option retirement savings program for Rhode Islanders

## Education

- Under the spending plan approved by the Assembly, schools will receive a \$70.9 million increase in state aid.
- The budget provides an additional \$1 million in operating supports for Community College of Rhode Island and \$2 million for University of Rhode Island, and continues both the Rhode Island Promise and the Hope scholarship programs, which provide two years of free tuition to Rhode Islanders at CCRI and Rhode Island College, respectively

## Environment & Shoreline Access

- A budget priority of mine: we added open space programs to the “green bond” to appear on November’s ballot: \$5 million for farmland protection, \$5 million to the Department of Environmental Management’s open space program and \$3 million to DEM’s Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment to fund forest and habitat management on state property.
- **We passed the Act on Coasts**, mandating the creation and maintenance of a statewide coastal resiliency plan to assess community vulnerabilities, recommend mitigation strategies along ocean and riverine coasts, and recommend financing strategies.
- We banned PFAS (also called “forever chemicals”), a group of manufactured chemicals that have detrimental health effects, from key consumer products
- **We passed an Oceanfront Real Estate Disclosure Law** that will educate new buyers of oceanfront property regarding shoreline access rights and related conditions during the sale of oceanfront property.

## Seniors & Retirees

- We raised the income tax exemption on certain pension plans and annuities income from \$20,000 to \$50,000 for qualified single filers, \$100,000 for joint filers.
- **A budget priority of mine: COLA’s will restart for pre-2012 retirees.** We repealed the suspension of full annual cost of living adjustments for state employees & teachers who retired before 2012, when the state’s pension reforms took effect. The calculation for pension benefits was also changed to base it on the highest three consecutive years of earning instead of five

## Transportation

- A budget priority of mine: We added another \$5 million to the \$10 million the governor proposed to help the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority close a \$18.1 million budget gap following the end of federal pandemic aid, avoiding service cuts.
- We directed \$7 million of unspent federal ARPA funds — \$2 million more than proposed — for an existing municipal grant program for construction of roads, sidewalks and bridges.

Support our work by donating for re-election!

## Past Meetings / Events



## Main Street Resilient Riverfront: Public Input Needed

The walking tour for the Main Street Resilient Riverfront Renewal project in Westerly was very informative- lots of initial ideas, from how to add green space and with it, stormwater drainage; how to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety; and more.



To view the project ideas and provide feedback on the interactive

map: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/89c64c24ae3146fdaeca8067b6c0e3f7>



## **Congratulations to the 2024 High School Grads!**

I am always humbled by the speeches that the high school seniors give at graduation - by their self-awareness and modesty. This high school class of 2024 went through a lot of disruption during their first few years of high school, because of COVID, but they got through it with perseverance and support systems that their families and teachers offered. Congratulations to the 2024 grads and good luck on this next step of your journey!





## Celebrating Memorial Day

This Memorial Day, it was great to see familiar faces, families and service members from Westerly and Charlestown. The parades and ceremonies underscored how grateful we are to those who put their lives on the line and those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom and our country.



## Press Conference Pushing for CRMC Reform

It was striking to me how, in the Senate environment committee, both aquaculture and recreational fishermen- who are often on opposing sides of a permitting issue- agree that the current process and structure at CRMC isn't working. It can take years to get permits, and it took nearly 20 years to settle the Block Island Champlain

Marina case. This isn't about taking sides for or against development. This is about good governance and making sure the agency functions well for Rhode Islanders. Thank you Save The Bay - Narragansett Bay for hosting the press conference, thank you to the many organizations who voiced their support, and shoutout to Terri Cortvriend (RI State Representative District 72) and Attorney General Peter Neronha



## **Celebrating AAPI Leaders in Rhode Island during AAPI Heritage Month**

At our RI State House AAPI month celebration, we recognized emerging leaders right here in Rhode Island. We reached out to Universities and asked them to



nominate outstanding students, faculty or staff, and organizations. We were so impressed by the response and by the great work that students and professors are doing- whether it's in academia, organizing events, or community service  
Watch the full event here: <https://capitolvri.cablecast.tv/show/9309?site=1>

Nominees:

Dr. Qing Yang and Hannah Jane Ramos - University of Rhode Island

Rachel Ly - Brown University

Dr. Blair Harrington - Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI)

Dr. Bing Huang, Providence College

AAPI Affinity Group, Bryant University

Asian Student Association, Rhode Island College (RIC)

Little India Student Group, Johnson & Wales University



## EMS Appreciation Night

We attended EMS appreciation night and delivered RI House & Senate certificates to the first responders, many of them volunteers, who responded to the incident at Clydesdale Tavern within the town of Westerly a few days before Christmas 2023. They saved four lives that day- people who had overdosed and were in cardiac arrest. Thank you to Westerly Police Department, Ashaway Ambulance Association, Stonington Police, Hope Valley Ambulance, Hopkinton Police, The Westerly Ambulance Corps, Inc., and Charlestown Ambulance Rescue Service for getting to the scene quickly and saving lives.



## **Delivered Legislative Grant to Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce**

Happy to support the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce in building up our small business community here in southern RI.



## **Delivered Legislative Grant to Frank Olean Center**

Glad to support the work that the Frank Olean Center does to help people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, by promoting school/work opportunities and inclusion in all aspects of life!







## RI Senators & Reps marching in the Pride parade

RI Senators & Reps joining the Providence Pride Parade- so glad to see the huge turnout. Happy #PRIDE month!



## Delivered Legislative Grant to Westerly Ambulance

Glad to support The Westerly Ambulance Corps with a \$5000 legislative grant to help purchase medical supplies, devices and carry bags for all the vehicles! Our EMS volunteers and professionals provide an essential service and last year Representative Spears and I worked to increase RI Medicaid reimbursement rates to help sustain these services





## First official Juneteenth holiday in Rhode Island!

This is the first year that #Juneteenth is a state holiday in Rhode Island! There was a wonderful community gathering in Wilcox Park, including music performances by Big Lux (Kevin Lowther) and others, art pieces, and speeches to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States (1865).

Thanks to members of Westerly ARC for putting this together!

## Upcoming Events / Places I'll Be

- **July 2nd-12th** We're gathering 100 signatures to qualify for the ballot. Join us at [victoria4ri.com/volunteer](https://victoria4ri.com/volunteer)
- **July 11th 6:30pm:** Charlestown Democrats Fundraiser with Guest Congressman Magaziner (contact [kfmarra@gmail.com](mailto:kfmarra@gmail.com) to RSVP)
- **August 1st-3rd** Attending the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators to learn from other states' initiatives to promote a sustainable future
- Ongoing meetings to set legislative priorities and revise bills for 2025
- Ongoing meetings with advocacy groups in both RI and CT to work together on bringing Shoreline East to Westerly and beyond

- **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!



## CRMC Enforcement At Work

CRMC staff have been working to remove the unauthorized posts and fencing at Green Hill Ocean Avenue in Green Hill.

If you have a concern or potential enforcement issue, call CRMC at 401-783-3370 or email [cstaff1@crmc.ri.gov](mailto:cstaff1@crmc.ri.gov) and put "enforcement" in the subject.

## Programs You May Apply for:

### Direct Pay for Clean Energy Projects

### Nonprofit Associations eligible for Direct Pay in place of Tax Credits

A number of constituents have been reaching out to me asking about programs to help their condo association or another nonprofit organization adopt solar. Here's a starter resource on Direct Pay, a program to pay nonprofits for clean energy projects. Instead of getting a tax credit like a person or business would, the nonprofit

would get 30% back as a direct payment on the cost of the project (subject to certain caps): <https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/directpay/>

Applicable entities can use Direct Pay for 12 of the Inflation Reduction Act's tax credits, including for generating clean electricity through solar, wind, and battery storage projects; building community solar projects that bring clean energy to neighborhood families; installing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; and purchasing clean vehicles for state or city vehicle fleets. See [a full list of applicable tax credits](#) for direct pay.

[Read More About Direct Pay](#)

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