

VICTORIA GU

State Senate — District **38** —

January Newsletter: Starting the 2025 Session



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Hope everyone had a restful holiday break! We're kicking off the 2025 Legislative Session and the past couple weeks have been full of meetings to talk over, draft and submit bills. Feel free to reach out to me with your ideas. Here are some bills I've submitted, and many of them were inspired by constituents who wrote in about the issues they're facing:

- a bill to **cap home insurance premium increases** at 5% a year for low/moderate income seniors. It also requires insurers to provide 2 month's notice before discontinuing a policy or raising anyone's annual premium by more than 20% in one year.
 - Feel free to email letters of support to slegislation@rilegislature.gov with the subject line: S-15 Support
- a bill to enable towns to have their own luxury real estate (over \$900,000) transfer tax, to help **fund affordable housing within the town**
 - Feel free to email letters of support to slegislation@rilegislature.gov with the subject line: S-37 Support

- a bill to **cap RI Energy's profit margins at 4% per year**
 - Feel free to email letters of support to slegislation@rilegislature.gov with the subject line: S-18 Support

Happening at the State House

- Gov McKee gave his State of the State address and released his budget. The House Finance and Senate Finance committees, over the coming months, will go through every article of the budget and make changes as new bills and appropriation requests come up. **It's a much tighter budget year compared to previous years.**
- The **RI Beach Erosion Commission** (chaired by Rep Azzinaro and Rep Spears is a member) had a presentation Jan 14th from the Army Corps of Engineers and CRMC. I also attended to meet the Army Corps representatives. Watch here: <https://capitolvri.cablecast.tv/show/10708>
- The **RI Bottle Bill Commission** had a hearing Jan 27th and will soon present its findings on best practices for plastic bottle recycling. Watch here: <https://capitolvri.cablecast.tv/show/10736>
- The **RI Short Term Rental Commission** will have a **meeting Feb 5th, 1pm** with Acting Secretary Deborah Goddard, RI Department of Housing presenting on the **effects of short-term rentals on our housing stock**. Agenda here. It will be livestreamed the day of at <https://capitolvri.cablecast.tv/>

Chairing the new RI Senate Committee on AI and Emerging Technologies

Artificial Intelligence is growing rapidly in its capabilities and in how widely it's being used in all aspects of society. I'm honored to chair this new committee and look forward to working with my fellow Senators on AI policy, Cybersecurity, and many other issues affecting Rhode Islanders. I'll definitely be writing about some upcoming bills in my newsletters, so stay tuned!





Thank you! 195 Letters Sent to Gov McKee, Congress Members for Commuter Rail

Thank you to everyone who has sent letters so far! For those who haven't, click on the link below to fill out a form that will auto-send to Gov McKee and your Congress Member (you can also customize the letter): <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/asking-congressmembers-to-support-westerly-station-upgrade-for-commuter-rail>

Would you like to see more rail service in our area that could take us to NYC, TF Green airport, Providence or Boston by expanding commuter rail service on the existing Northeast rail corridor?

The Westerly Station is being considered next year for an engineering/feasibility study of high-level platforms that would enable commuter rail and greatly improve

access for people with disabilities. Gov McKee's support and Congressional support is needed for funding. You can make a difference by sending a letter. Especially powerful would be testimonial for how you have enjoyed rail travel or how you might use commuter rail.

Email Gov McKee And Your Congress Members Today



Blue Envelope program launches in Rhode Island

Very excited to announce the launch of the Blue Envelope program with Representative Azzinaro and DMV Director Walter Craddock. For drivers on the autism spectrum: You can pick up the Blue Envelope at any DMV office. You put your driver's license, registration, and emergency contact card in it and keep the envelope in your car. If you get pulled over, you hand the blue envelope to the officer, and the envelope contains instructions to help improve communication for both the officer and the driver.

I'm tremendously proud of the Westerly High School students who came all the way to the RI State House at least four times to testify on the Blue Envelope program and why we should bring it to Rhode Island. Together we made that happen.

Learn more

Meeting with Gov Mckee, RIDOT on raising platforms at Westerly Station

Thank you **Governor Dan McKee** and RIDOT Director Peter Alviti for meeting with us last week. Five of us came from Westerly to the RI State House to advocate for the Amtrak engineering/feasibility study for high-level platforms at Westerly station, which is the first step to enabling easier & more frequent Amtrak stops, commuter rail (extending Shoreline East to RI), and ADA accessibility.

Pictured: Myself, Town Council President Chris Duhamel, Town Manager Shawn Lacey, Economic Development Commission Chair Doug Brockway, Alex Berardo (RI Assn of Railroad Passengers)



Help us by emailing Gov Mckee and Congress Members Today!

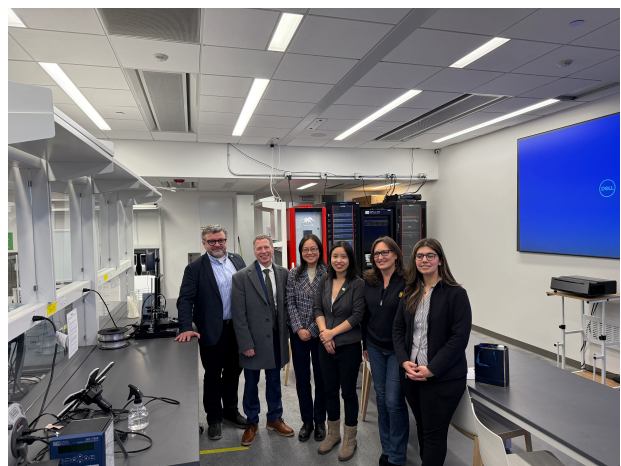
Chariho Joint School Committee, Town + State Reps Meeting

We had our annual Chariho joint school committee meeting in January with each of the school committee members and town councils of Charlestown, Richmond, and Hopkinton. Many issues were discussed including protecting regional transportation aid in the state's funding of Chariho (which was fully funded the last few years), observing that locally run bus services are more cost-efficient than the state-run services, the state funding of special education, and much more. It's great for us to get together each year and hear what the school district's priorities are.



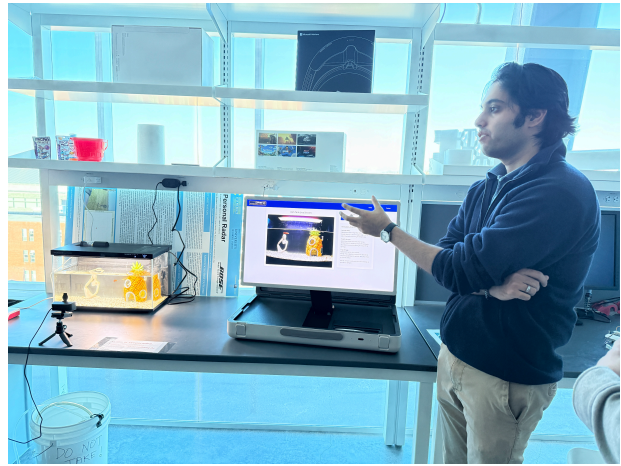
URI Engineering Demos on AI used in Education, Personal Assistants

URI Engineering professors and students hosted members of the RI Senate AI & Emerging Technologies committee and had live demos to illustrate how AI could be used in education (like interactive



homework assignments), administrative work like scheduling/personal assistants, and even video monitoring (of a fish tank, but the concerning part is the same underlying technology could generally be used for video surveillance). Thank you to the folks at URI - we always learn so much from you!

In attendance: URI CIO Gabriele Fariello, URI Dean of Engineering Anthony Marchese, Myself, Senator Lori Urso, Senator Sam Zurier, Senator Gordon Rogers



First Day of the 2025 Legislative Session

On January 7th I was sworn into my second term as State Senator representing RI Senate District 38. I'm humbled to be serving my community again and excited to continue the work we started on climate resiliency, shoreline access, healthcare access, housing affordability, and much more



SEN. GU'S CALENDAR

JAN 27

Discuss legislative priorities with Westerly Town Council, 5:30pm at Town Hall

JAN 28

Ribbon Cutting, Habitat for Humanity South County

JAN 31

Community resilience to climate change workshop at Roger Williams University

FEB 7

NCSL Artificial Intelligence Task Force Meeting

FEB 10

Commuter Rail Advocates meeting, 2nd floor Westerly Library at 9:30am

FEB 10

Discuss legislative priorities with Charlestown Town Council, 7pm at Town Hall

FEB 13

WBLQ Resiliency Radio Hour (Tune in at 9am)

Note: This calendar mainly includes public meetings or workshops. If you have any questions or want to attend, email sen-gu@rilegislature.gov

Responding to RI CyberAttack



Protect Your Personal Info:

#1: Freeze Your Credit

Freeze your credit for free by reaching out to **all three** credit reporting agencies so no one else can take out a loan or establish credit in your name.

#2: Monitor Your Credit

Contact one of the credit reporting agencies to order a **free credit report**.

#3: Request a Fraud Alert

Contact one of the credit reporting agencies to place a free fraud alert on your files. This lets creditors know they must contact you before any new accounts can be opened.

#4 Use Multifactor Authentication

This means having a safety backup for your passwords to help prove that it's really you before logging into your account.

#5 Be Aware

You may receive fake e-mails, phone calls or texts that look legitimate. **Never** share personal information through an unsolicited e-mail, call or text.

Over 600,000 Rhode Islanders' data was exposed in this cyberattack. Anyone who applied for state health coverage or health and human services programs should take the steps outlined above to protect their personal info. I highly encourage people to take about 15 minutes to freeze their credit so that no one can take out fraudulent loans or credit cards in your name. Here are the three major credit bureaus where you can request a freeze for free. You can always go back and unfreeze it if you want to apply for a new loan.

<https://www.transunion.com/credit-freeze>

<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-freeze/>

<https://www.experian.com/help/credit-freeze/>

Those impacted will receive a letter on how to access free credit monitoring. According to our Constituent Services: applications for support received through the portal in December, but not approved prior to the cyberattack, will be honored and benefits will be paid retroactively upon approval.

If you have questions, please contact the RIBridges Data Breach Hotline: 833-918-6603

Mon-Fri 9am-9pm

Weekends 11am-8pm

[Find out more at CyberAlert.RI.Gov](#)

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