



State Senate — District **38** —

March Newsletter & Fundraiser on Wed April 9th



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We're about halfway through our legislative session for 2025, and we've been building momentum and support for a lot of major bills. Here's a very quick run-down of the first few months of 2025:

- **Introduced 27 bills:** Building on the momentum from the last 2 years, I introduced a package of three **shoreline access bills** for the 2025 session to protect access to rights-of-ways to the water. I also introduced bills to protect people from **crypto-ATM scams**, require advance notice for **home insurance** cancellations / rate hikes, provide incentives (in the form of infrastructure dollars) for towns developing **affordable housing**, and improve the **energy efficiency** of buildings
 - To read all my bills, you can go to <https://status.rilegislature.gov/>, select my name in the drop-down menu for "Sponsor", click on "Prime Sponsor", then click on the "Enter" button
- **Appointed Chair of the new RI Senate Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Committee:** 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 using my work experience in software & machine learning to ensure that Rhode Islanders benefit from new technologies but are also protected from the downsides.

- **Hosted town halls** with RI AARP and the RI Attorney General's office to help residents learn about common scams/fraud and how to avoid them. Just this past week, a store employee notified Westerly Police of a suspected scam and they got there just in time to stop the scam victim from depositing \$20,000 into the crypto-ATM at Cumberland Farms in Westerly.
- **Sent monthly newsletters** to keep our community in the loop about what's happening at the State House
- Personally answered constituent emails, phone calls, and support requests
- And much more

Read Press Highlights from the State House



Recording of "Protecting Yourself from Frauds & Scams" Town Hall at Westerly Senior Center on March 17th. Part 1 Above, Part 2 Below



Recap of Town Hall March 17th: Protecting Yourself & Loved Ones from Scams & Fraud

Scamming is a huge criminal enterprise and there are a number of steps you can take for peace of mind, including freezing your credit so that no one can take out loans in your name. Thank you Matt Netto from AARP Rhode Island and Mikaela Driscoll from the Office of Attorney General Peter Neronha for helping educate folks at the Senior Center and Westerly Library

Actions You Can Take Today:

- **Freeze Your Credit** ([instructions here](#))
- **Enroll in Identity Theft and Credit Monitoring**
 - Everyone affected by the RIBridges hack can receive free credit monitoring and identity theft insurance for 5 years and identity restoration for your lifetime through Experian. The instructions to enroll were sent to you in the mail, with a unique code to enroll. Ensure that you enroll by April 30, 2025 (Your code will not work after this date.
- Make it a dinner table topic: talk to your older family members and friends about common scams/fraud and how to protect themselves

Finally, make sure to **report scams** so that law enforcement can stay up-to-date on the latest scams targeting Rhode Islanders:

- If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection team at **401-274-4400, prompt 1** or email us at consumers@riag.ri.gov. If you are over the age of 60 and in need of assistance, please contact the Elder Abuse Unit at **401-274-4400, prompt 6**.
- **Common scams are listed here:** <https://riag.ri.gov/scams>



Join us for a fundraiser in
support of

VICTORIA GU RI STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 38

WED APRIL 9, 2025

6-8PM

ASIA GRILLE
(PRIVATE DINING ROOM)
140 HILLSIDE RD
CRANSTON, RI

Suggested Donation
\$40 Young Professional
\$100 Supporter
\$250 Champion
victoria4ri.com/apr9

Get your ticket today: victoria4ri.com/apr9

**Re-Election Fundraiser on Wednesday
April 9th, 6-8pm at Asia Grille (140
Hillside Rd, Cranston)**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I'm thrilled to invite you to a fundraiser for my re-election campaign. Together, we've made real progress—

- securing Rhode Islanders' right to shoreline access
- passing the Act on Coasts to plan for sea level rise and stronger storms
- expanding mental health funding in schools
- and much more

But there's more to do, and I need your help to keep the momentum going! Join us for a fun and inspiring evening as we celebrate our achievements and look ahead to the future. Can't wait to see you there!

P.S. By tradition, Senators have their fundraisers up north, near Providence, during the Jan-June legislative session, so that other Senators and elected officials from across the state can attend, but after the session ends in June we will have a fundraiser in the Westerly/Charlestown/SK area!

Date/Time: Wed April 9th, 6-8pm

Address: Asia Grille (Private Dining Room): 140 Hillside Rd, Cranston, RI

Get your ticket today: victoria4ri.com/apr9

Happening at the State House



- **CRMC Reform hearings:** Yesterday, many organizations showed up to testify in favor of S-775 a CRMC reform bill that would make the controversial politically-appointed council an advisory body and essentially structure the agency as a Department of Coastal Resources, similar to the Department of Coastal Management.

View the bill testimony starting at 8 minutes into the meeting, my remarks at 13:28 <https://capitoltvri.cablecast.tv/show/11019?site=1>

Read news coverage here: <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2025/03/26/now-in-its-third-year-crmc-reform-bill-sees-surge-of-support/>

- "You have an opportunity with this legislation to restore transparency, accountability and public trust in our coastal agency. Continuing with the status quo simply because 'well...that's just how we've always done it' doesn't make a whole lot of sense, because we can do better." - Jed Thorp, Save The Bay's Director of Advocacy
Learn More: SaveBay.org/Advocacy

- **Capping Copays for Patients with Diabetes:** Happy to vote in favor of this bill sponsored by Senator Melissa Murray to limit insured patients' copays for supplies and equipment used to treat diabetes to \$25 for a 30-day supply. The bill has the passed the RI Senate and now heads to the RI House of Representatives.

- The RI Senate Education Committee heard a lot of passionate testimony on **“Freedom to Read”**: (SB 238) sponsored by Senator McKenney, which aims to promote free expression by prohibiting the censorship of library materials. Introduced on February 13, 2025, it was scheduled for a hearing on March 7, 2025. It passed the Senate last year, so I expect it to pass the Senate again this year, but it also needs to pass the House so reach out to your State Representative.
- **Public Testimony Now Posted Online:** The RI Senate has enacted a rule change to publish written public testimony online, enhancing transparency and public access to legislative proceedings. You may view public documents for any committee here: <https://www.rilegislature.gov/senators/SenateComDocs/Pages/default.aspx>

Shoreline Access Bills Introduced



Rhode Island House of Representatives

23h · 🔊

Terri Cortvriend, RI State Representative District 72 and **RI State Senator Victoria Gu, District 38** have introduced legislation to protect Rhode Islanders' access to the shoreline by allowing towns to preserve recreation easements on abandoned roads and protecting parking near these rights of way.

"For most beachgoers, the ability to enjoy our shoreline requires somewhere nearby to park," said Representative Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown). "This is especially true for seniors, the disabled and others with mobility issues, so it is important that any changes made to parking near public rights of way are made through an open, transparent and public process that takes into account the public's right to access the shore."

More information: <https://www.rilegislature.gov/.../ril.../DisplayForm.aspx...>

I'm excited to introduce two new shoreline access bills and re-introduce our road abandonment bill from last year.

The new bills:

- H-5686 / S-626 will require towns to identify & maintain a list of CRMC-designated rights of ways and display them on official maps. This will help the average member of the public understand where the rights of ways are (Rep Kathy Fogarty is the House sponsor)

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5686.pdf>

Submit testimony to HouseMunicipalGovernmentandHousing@rilegislature.gov with subject line H-5686 and SLegislation@rilegislature.gov with subject line S-626

- H-6093 / S-716 Whenever a town is considering changing parking near a right-of-way, they would be required under this new bill to follow certain procedures like a public comment period, ADA accessibility standards for parking, and an agency approval process. This adds more safeguards against reduction of parking near rights-of-ways (Rep Terri Cortvriend is the House sponsor)

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/SenateText25/S0716.pdf>

Submit testimony to HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov with subject line H-6093 and SLegislation@rilegislature.gov with subject line S-716



**Thank you! Commuter Rail Letters &
Advocates featured in Providence
Journal**

Read the Providence Journal Article

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.



WBLQ Radio Interviews

Every few weeks I'm on the radio with Frank Prosnitz at **WBLQ - FM 103.1 and Stereo 1230** to update folks on what's happening at the state house and what I'm working on. March topics:

- Recap of the fraud & scams town hall, presenting my bill regulating Crypto-ATM's
- An update on short-term rentals taxation / regulation efforts
- Home Energy Efficiency: how a Whole Home Repair program (started in Pennsylvania) could help people that have health & safety issues in their homes (things not built to code) and then

allow them to do weatherization and lower their utility bills

Check out the recordings on the **WBLQ Podcast page** (the March interview is not posted yet but here is the February link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/.../iyb-with-victoria-gu-2-24...>)

- February Topics: New AI & Emerging Technologies Committee in the Senate, RI House Beach Erosion Study Commission, Impacts of Climate Change on Home Insurance Premiums, Utility Bills, Update on CRMC Reform

Town Hall on RI Energy & Utility Bills

This past Monday at the SKHS Auditorium: RI Energy representatives and South Kingstown Representatives and Senators hosted a town hall on utility bills.

We know the last two months have been especially hard because of the cold snap, and we wanted to give people a chance to get their specific questions about their utility bills answered. RI Energy had a customer service table at the event.

We also want to make sure that everyone who qualifies knows about the payment plans that may be available to



them. For example, at this page you can see if you are eligible for LIHEAP (heating assistance program) and how to apply: <https://dhs.ri.gov/programs-and-services/energy-assistance-programs-heating/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program>



State Summit on AI Legislation

Glad to be a panelist at the State Summit on AI Legislation (SSAIL) over the weekend! We talked about how states can share resources and coordinate on AI legislation in the absence of federal action. Topics included:

- AI used to spread misinformation and synthetic videos or other media during elections
- Greater transparency and risk assessment when AI is used to make "consequential decisions" like employment (screening resumes), housing (screening tenants and mortgage applications), etc



Supporting Healthcare Workers (SEIU 1199)

Glad to meet and hear from so many hardworking healthcare providers, home care workers, and more from **1199 SEIU Rhode Island**, who do this work because they care and want to help our children, our seniors, and everyone in between.

A number of workers cited issues with recruitment and retention. This is a tough budget year, but we're going to fight so that our #healthcareheroes have fair wages and benefits and safe working conditions, which will help improve care for all patients



Thinking about building or renovating an ADU (accessory dwelling unit)?

Representative June Speakman and I, joined by House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi, helped announce a new financing program RIHousing is offering to help Rhode Island homeowners build accessory dwelling units (ADU)'s.

RIHousing's [FHA 203\(k\) Loan program](#) assists homebuyers or current homeowners who wish to renovate and/or expand their properties with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), a smaller, independent residential unit located on the same lot as a primary single- or multi-family home. The addition of an ADU can mean multigenerational living on one property or a space to rent to generate additional income.

[Read more about the ADU Financing Program](#)

[View email in browser](#)

[update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)