

State of Rhode Island

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 Sixth day of January in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six.

Volume 153, No. 17

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Seventeenth Legislative Day

CALL TO ORDER

The Senate meets pursuant to recess and is called to order by The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson, President of the Senate, at 3:37 o'clock P.M.

SPECIAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY PERFORMANCE

The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson, President of the Senate presents the Rhode Island Professional Firefighters Pipes and Drums Band to deliver a Saint Patrick's Day Performance.

ROLL CALL

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 32 Senators present and 6 Senators absent as follows:

PRESENT –32: The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, Senators Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, de la Cruz, DiMario, Dimitri, DiPalma, Euer, Famiglietti, Felag, Gallo, Gu, Kallman, LaMountain, Lauria, Mack, McKenney, Morgan, Murray, Raptakis, Quezada, Rogers, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, Vargas, and Zurier.

ABSENT – 6: Senators Acosta, Paolino, Patalano, Pearson, Sosnowski, and Valverde.

INVOCATION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents Senator Murray to deliver the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF RECORD

The Senate Journal of the Sixteenth Day of the 2026 proceedings is read in part.

Upon suggestion of Senator Murray and by unanimous consent, further reading of the Journal is dispensed with and the Journal approved as recorded.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Tikoian and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber David Balducci – McDonald’s Owner Operator, Barbara Balducci – McDonald’s Owner Operator, Joseph Spadea – McDonald’s Owner Operator, Patricia Spadea – McDonald’s Owner Operator, Lauren Hoops Schmiege – CEO, Ronald McDonald House New England, Tina Ledo – Chief Strategy Officer, Ronald McDonald House New England, Hanah Fadrigalan - Director of Marketing, Ronald McDonald House New England; Elana Margolis – McDonald’s, State & Local Government Relations, Russell Lowe – McDonald’s, State & Local Government Relations.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable President presents the following communication from His Excellency, The Governor, transmitting the following appointments and requesting the advice and consent of the Senate thereto:



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

March 16, 2026

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE,

I have the honor to inform you in accordance with the provisions of Section § 23-99-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I have made the following nomination to the Chair of the Life Science Hub of Rhode Island:

Will Tsonos
Chair

For a term expiring January 1, 2030.

To this Appointment, I respectfully request your advice and consent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel J. McKee', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

Cc:Honorable Valarie J. Lawson, Senate President
Honorable Frank A. Ciccone, Senate Majority Leader
Honorable Jessica de la Cruz, Senate Minority Leader

RHODE ISLAND STATE HOUSE, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903

Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**Senate Resolution No. 3122****BY** Lawson, Ciccone**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION CELEBRATING ST. PATRICK'S DAY AND HONORING IRISH AMERICAN PATRIOTS' ROLE IN THE UNITED STATES WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

{LC6113/1}

Recommended for Immediate Consideration.

Senator Burke requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

Senator Burke moves passage, seconded by The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, Senators Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, de la Cruz, DiMario, Dimitri, DiPalma, Euer, Famiglietti, Felag, Gallo, Kallman, LaMountain, Lauria, Mack, McKenney, Morgan, Murray, Raptakis, Quezada, Rogers, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, and Zurier.

The resolution is read and passed upon a voice vote.

Senator Burke delivers an Irish Blessing for the Senate Session.

May our speeches be shorter than our agendas,
Our tempers cooler than the chamber air,
And our amendments fewer than our opinions.
May we listen at least once before we object,
Vote with courage—especially when it's inconvenient,
And remember... even in this room, common sense is still allowed.
And if all else fails, may a touch of Irish luck
Get us out of here before dinner.

Appendix**CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026:****1. 2026-S 3051****BY** de la Cruz**ENTITLED**, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE FORMATION OF A REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT EMBRACING THE TOWNS OF FOSTER AND GLOCESTER

Committee on Housing & Municipal Government recommends passage.

Senator de la Cruz moves passage of the act, seconded by The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, Senators The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, Senators Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, de la Cruz, Dimitri, Euer, Famiglietti, Felag, Gallo, Gu, Kallman, LaMountain, Lauria, Mack, McKenney, Morgan, Raptakis, Quezada, Rogers, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, and Zurier.

The act is read and passed, upon a roll call vote, with 33 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS – 33: The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, Senators Appollonio, Bell, Bissaillon, Britto, Burke, Ciccone, de la Cruz, DiMario, Dimitri, DiPalma, Euer, Famiglietti, Felag, Gallo, Gu, Kallman, LaMountain, Lauria, Mack, McKenney, Morgan, Murray, Pearson, Raptakis, Quezada, Rogers, Thompson, Tikoian, Ujifusa, Urso, Vargas, and Zurier.

NAYS – 0:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Felag announces that the Senate Committee on Finance will meet on Thursday, March 19th at 3:00 pm in Room 211.

Senator Murray announces that the Senate Committee on Education will meet on Wednesday, March 18th at 4:00 pm in Room 313.

Senator Thompson announces that the Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming will meet on Wednesday, March 18th at 4:00pm in Room 212.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senators Quezada and Bell and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber former member of the Rhode Island House of Representatives Anastasia Williams.

TRANSMITTAL

By unanimous consent, all matters on the Secretary's desk are ordered to be transmitted to His Excellency, the Governor, the Honorable Secretary of State or to the Honorable House of Representatives forthwith.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Tikoian, seconded by Senate Majority Leader Ciccone, the Senate adjourns at 4:01 o'clock P.M.

HELENA S. REID
Secretary of the Senate

Appendix

INVOCATION

SENATOR MELISSA A. MURRAY

May the road rise to meet you, May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields and, until we meet again may you be held in kindness and peace.

Appendix

CONSENT CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026:

- 1. 2026-S 3101**
BY Lawson
ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION CELEBRATING MARCH 19, 2026, AS
"RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

Appendix**CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026:**

- 1. 2026-S 2350**
BY DiPalma
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Committee on Education recommends passage.

- 2. 2026-S 2110**
BY Lauria
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS IN CHILDREN RELIEF FUND

Committee on Health & Human Services recommends passage.

- 3. 2026-S 2870**
BY Murray
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LEAD POISONING PREVENTION ACT

Committee on Health & Human Services recommends passage.

- 4. 2026-S 2871**
BY Murray
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN

Committee on Health & Human Services recommends passage.

- 5. 2026-S 2873**
BY DiPalma
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Committee on Health & Human Services recommends passage.