

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. 18

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Eighteenth 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 4:11 o'clock P.M.

ROLL CALL

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 33 Senators present and 5 Senators absent as follows:

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

ABSENT – 5: Senators Acosta, Euer, Felag, Patalano, and Pearson.

INVOCATION

The Honorable President, by unanimous consent, presents Reverend Bruce A. Lewandowski, Bishop of Providence to deliver the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF RECORD

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Honorable President of the Senate presents the following communications:

<p>SENATOR JONATHON ACOSTA District 16</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Room 310 Rhode Island State House Providence, Rhode Island 02903</p> <p>Office: 401-276-5582 sen-acosta@rilegislature.gov</p>	<p>State of Rhode Island</p>  <p>Senate Chamber</p>	<p>Committee on Finance</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Committee on Rules Government Ethics & Oversight</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Committee on Special Legislation & Veterans' Affairs</p>
<p>March 17, 2026</p>		
<p>The Honorable Valerie Lawson President of the Senate State House, Room 318 Providence, RI 02903</p> <p>Dear President Lawson:</p> <p>Please be advised and let the record reflect that I will be absent from the Chamber on Thursday, March 19, 2026.</p> <p>I would appreciate your recording my letter in the appropriate Senate Journal.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>		
<p>Respectfully,</p>  <p>Jonathon Acosta Senator District 16</p>		

Placed on file.

State of Rhode Island

SENATOR
DAWN EUER
District 13

Room 112
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

OFFICE: 401-276-5589

sen-euer@rilegislature.gov



Committee on
Judiciary

Committee on
Special Legislation &
Veterans' Affairs

Committee on Rules,
Government Ethics & Oversight

Senate Chamber

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson
President of the Senate
State House, Room 318
Providence, RI 02903

Dear President Lawson:

Please be advised and let the record reflect that I will be absent from the Chamber today,
Thursday, March 19, 2026.

Please record my letter in the appropriate Senate Journal. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Euer", written in a cursive style.

Dawn Euer
Senator - District 13

Placed on file.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Chairwoman Gallo, from the Committee on Education, reports back, with recommendation of passage of the following measures:

The Reappointment of Margo Cook to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.

Placed on the Calendar for Thursday, March 26.

The Reappointment of Joseph Formicola to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.

Placed on the Calendar for Thursday, March 26.

The Reappointment of Vahid Ownjazayeri to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.

Placed on the Calendar for Thursday, March 26.

The Reappointment of Thomas M. Ryan to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.

Placed on the Calendar for Thursday, March 26.

The Reappointment of Armand E. Sabitoni to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.

Placed on the Calendar for Thursday, March 26.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GAMING

Chairman Burke, from the Committee on Labor, reports back, with recommendation of passage of the following measure:

The Reappointment of Christopher Fierro to the Labor & Training Board of Review for a term expiring February 1, 2031.

Placed on the Consent Calendar for Tuesday, March 24.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**Senate Resolution No. 3123****BY** Ciccone, Lawson**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE CELEBRATION OF ST. JOSEPH'S DAY

{LC6112/1}

Recommended for Immediate Consideration.

Senator Ciccone requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

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

The resolution is read and passed upon a voice vote.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Upon suggestion of The Honorable President Valarie J. Lawson, and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber The Honorable Daniel J. McKee, 76th Governor of Rhode Island, Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos, Secretary of State Gregg Amore, Attorney General Peter Neronha, General Treasurer James Diossa, Speaker of the House Representative K. Joseph Shekarchi, and House Majority Leader Christopher Blazejewski.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**Senate Resolution No. 3124****BY** Lawson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Gallo**ENTITLED**, SENATE RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE LATE SENATE PRESIDENT DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO AND COMMEMORATING THE NAMING OF THE RHODE ISLAND SENATE CHAMBER IN HIS HONOR
{LC5976/1}

Recommended for Immediate Consideration.

Senator Ciccone requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

Unanimous consent for immediate consideration is granted.

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

The resolution is read and passed upon a voice vote.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Upon suggestion of Senator Gallo and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber The Honorable Former Senate President William V. Irons, The Honorable Former Senate President M. Theresa Paiva Weed, The Honorable Former Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algieri, The Honorable Senator Stephen Alves, The Honorable Senator Stephen R. Archambault, The Honorable Senator Sandra Cano, The Honorable Senator Frank Lombardi, The Honorable Senator John Revens, The Honorable Senator Joshua Miller, The Honorable Cynthia Armour Coyne, and The Honorable Senator John J. Tassoni.

Upon suggestion of Senator Tikoian and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber The Honorable Erin Lynch Prata, former State Senator and Associate Justice on the Rhode Island Supreme Court, The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano, former President of the Senate and Associate Justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court, The Honorable Michael McCaffrey, former Senate Majority Leader and Associate Judge of the Rhode Island District Court.

Upon suggestion of Senator Tikoian and by unanimous consent, the Honorable Senate President, welcomes to the Chamber the Friends & Family of the of the late Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio; son Charles Ruggerio and his wife, Jillian, daughter Amanda Fallon and her husband, PJ; his four beloved grandchildren, Ava Ruggerio, Mia Ruggerio, Natalie Fallon, and Jameson Fallon; his sister, Lisa Aceto, and her husband, James; and his nieces and nephew, Christine DeSimone, Justine Mello, and Anthony Aceto, Daniel Bianco, Michael Sabatoni, Armand Sabatoni, Raymond Simone, Joseph Masino, Vincent Masino, Darren Corrente, Pat Crowley, Joe Baxter, North Providence Town Council President Dino Autiello, Ernie Carlucci, George Nee, Representative Corvese, Lisa Catone, Cully Fleming, David Salvatore, Andrew Annaldo, and Peter Mancini.

**DEDICATION OF THE SENATE CHAMBER
SENATE PRESIDENT DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO**

The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson, President of the Senate invites the Family of the late Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero, his son Charles Ruggiero and daughter Amanda Fallon along with Reverend Bruce A. Lewandowski, Bishop of Providence to formally Dedicate and Bless the Senate Chamber and unveil the commemorative plaque in memory of the late Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero.

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.

Upon motion of Senator Ciccone, seconded by Senator de la Cruz, the following measures on Today's Consent Calendar, by unanimous consent, are read and passed, upon a roll call vote:

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

NAYS – 0:

TRANSFER OF BILL

Senator Britto, In accordance with Senate Rule 6.14, moves to transfer the following bill from the Senate Committee on Commerce to the Senate Committee to on Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies.

Senate Bill No. 2766

BY Gu, DiPalma, Urso, Vargas, Zurier, Paolino, Burke

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- RHODE ISLAND DELETE ACT (Requires any entity that knowingly collects, shares or sells to third parties the personal data of a consumer to register with the department of business regulations and permits for the consumer to request deletion of the personal data.)
{LC5693/1}

Read and referred to the Committee on Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies.

TRANSFER OF BILL

Senator LaMountain, In accordance with Senate Rule 6.14, moves to transfer the following bill from the Senate Committee on Judiciary to the Senate Committee to on Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies.

Senate Bill No. 2968

BY DiPalma, Gu, Zurier, Urso

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- RHODE ISLAND SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATION ACT (Creates the Rhode Island Social Media Regulation act, which would not permit a Rhode Island resident who is a minor to be an account holder on a social media's platform unless the minor has the express consent of a parent or guardian.)
{LC4225/1}

Read and referred to the Committee on Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies.

NEW BUSINESS**Senate Bill No. 3125**

BY Ciccone, Tikoian, Burke, Rogers, de la Cruz, Thompson, Murray
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS --
REGULATORY POWERS OF ADMINISTRATION (Provides that every gas distribution
company that charges for the distribution of would need to include certain information on any
bill or statement provided to the consumer.)
{LC6143/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Commerce.

Senate Bill No. 3126

(by request)
BY DiPalma
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- SALES AND USE TAXES--
LIABILITY AND COMPUTATION (Exempts from sales tax the amount paid for a parking
space at municipally operated beach parking in the town of Middletown.)
{LC6148/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3127

BY Raptakis, Burke, Quezada, LaMountain, Thompson
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS
AND INSTALLATION OF SYSTEMS (Amends the audit compliance requirements for
municipalities' contributions to pension plans under the budget of accounts and installation of
systems chapter.)
{LC4503/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3128

BY DiPalma
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- THE RHODE ISLAND
CANNABIS ACT (Provides for annual appropriations to the substance use mental health
leadership council to address hazardous and underage cannabis use.)
{LC6149/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3129**BY** Thompson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Famiglietti, Quezada, Burke, Urso, Dimitri**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PERSONAL INCOME TAX (Allows a modification to federal adjusted gross income for all public pension benefits administered by the Employees Retirement System of Rhode Island.)

{LC6160/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3130**BY** DiPalma**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO LIBRARIES -- STATE AID TO LIBRARIES

(Increases reimbursement caps promulgated in 2018 and applies to eligible costs for library projects incurred from June 30, 2025 through June 30, 2031, or ending earlier if the Office of Library Information Services amends the regulations.)

{LC6151/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3131**BY** DiPalma**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- CIGARETTE, OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS, AND ELECTRONIC NICOTINE-DELIVERY SYSTEM PRODUCTS (Defines an alternative nicotine product as any noncombustible product without tobacco leaf but nicotine from another source and also taxes alternative nicotine products at \$2.00 per container up to 20 units.)

{LC6176/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3132**BY** Britto, Burke, Murray**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- RELOCATION OF UTILITY

SERVICES (Allows the state to require utilities to relocate facilities for certain highway projects and to pay the cost of the relocation to the utility as part of the cost of the federally aided highway project.)

{LC6172/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3133**BY** Britto, McKenney, Burke, Murray**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- SALES AND USE TAXES -- LIABILITY AND COMPUTATION (Establishes a restricted receipt account for the benefit of the Rhode Island public transit authority, funded by sales taxes collected from ride-share companies, which said sales taxes would be exempt from indirect cost recovery provisions.)
{LC4331/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Finance.

Senate Bill No. 3134

(Attorney General)

BY Raptakis, Burke, McKenney, Dimitri, Quezada, LaMountain, Thompson**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION (Provides that violations of § 11-37.1-10 relating to failing to register as a sex offender are subject to the duration and frequency of registrations pursuant to § 11-37.1-4.)
{LC5643/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Judiciary.

Senate Bill No. 3135

(Attorney General)

BY Raptakis, Dimitri, McKenney, LaMountain, Burke, Quezada, Thompson**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES (Restores law enforcement discretion, allowing officers to issue a verbal warning when appropriate or pursue misdemeanor or felony charges in more egregious cases where a child is left unattended in a motor vehicle.)
{LC5636/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Judiciary.

Senate Bill No. 3136**BY** Britto, Burke, Murray**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- REAL ESTATE BROKERS AND SALESPERSONS (Requires any person in the business of selling, assigning or buying an equitable interest in real estate without taking legal title to such property, to be licensed as a real estate broker or salesperson and to comply with the disclosure requirements.)
{LC6171/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Judiciary.

Senate Bill No. 3137**BY** DiPalma

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' TENURE (Requires any teacher under suspension for criminal conduct to repay the school district for any salary received if convicted of a felony, less any amounts paid to satisfy taxes and employee benefits. It also makes one typographical correction.)

{LC6150/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Labor and Gaming.

Senate Bill No. 3138**BY** Thompson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Famiglietti, Quezada, Burke, Urso, Dimitri

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION (Creates a new class of retirement status license for retirees that had possessed a professional license issued by the department of labor and training.)

{LC6159/1}

Introduced, referred to Senate Labor and Gaming.

Senate Resolution No. 3139**BY** Acosta

ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE RETURN OF CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOLS TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE (This resolution would extend the reporting and expiration dates of the special Joint Legislative Commission to Study the Return of Central Falls Schools to Local Governance, from March 3, 2026, to April 10, 2026, and would expire on July 1, 2026.)

{LC6158/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Chairman LaMountain, from the Committee on Judiciary, reports back, with recommendation of passage of the following measure:

House Bill No. 7007 as amended

(Secretary of State)

BY O'Brien, Shanley, Solomon, Dawson, Biah, McEntee, Noret, Read, Azzinaro, Corvese
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS (Entitles disabled and military voters to utilize electronically transmitted ballots.)

{LC3125/1}

Placed on the Senate Calendar.

COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL LEGISLATION AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Chairman Felag, from the Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs, reports back, with recommendation of passage of the following measure:

House Bill No. 7223

BY Boylan

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- PERMANENT JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAMING ALL NEW BUILDINGS, BRIDGES, EDIFICES AND OTHER STATE CONSTRUCTIONS (Names the new coveside dog park, located at Haines Memorial State Park in Barrington "The Christine Conrad Lane Memorial Dog Park.")

{LC4376/1}

Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Senator Tikoian, seconded by Senate Majority Leader Ciccone, the Senate adjourns at 4:40 o'clock P.M.

HELENA S. REID
Secretary of the Senate

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

1. *The Reappointment of Christopher Fierro to the Labor & Training Board of Review for a term expiring February 1, 2031.*

Committee on Labor & Gaming recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

2. **2026-S 3139**
BY Acosta
ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE RETURN OF CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOLS TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Ordered on the Consent Calendar.

3. **2026-H 7223**
BY Boylan
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- PERMANENT JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAMING ALL NEW BUILDINGS, BRIDGES, EDIFICES AND OTHER STATE CONSTRUCTIONS

Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs recommends passage in concurrence.

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.

Appendix**CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026:**

1. ***The Reappointment of Margo Cook to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.***

Committee on Education recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

2. ***The Reappointment of Joseph Formicola to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.***

Committee on Education recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

3. ***The Reappointment of Vahid Ownjazayeri to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.***

Committee on Education recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

4. ***The Reappointment of Thomas M. Ryan to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.***

Committee on Education recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

5. ***The Reappointment of Armand E. Sabitoni to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees for a term expiring February 1, 2029.***

Committee on Education recommends that the Senate give its Advice and Consent to this nomination.

6. **2026-H 7007 as amended
BY O'Brien
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS**

Committee on Judiciary recommends passage as amended in concurrence.