

# RHODE ISLANDERS FOR IMMIGRATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

R.I.I.L.E.

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P.O. Box 01, Central Falls, RI 02863

[www.riile.org](http://www.riile.org) – [info@riile.org](mailto:info@riile.org)

## SILENCE IS CONSENT – LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

We hope you all observed July 4, Independence Day for the United States of America, with your expressions of patriotism—remembering why independence was necessary, the battles that had to be fought, the hardships that had to be overcome, the people who came before us, and the people who continue to put themselves in harm's way to ensure that we will continue to protect and preserve the unalienable rights endowed by our Creator and to support and defend our Constitution. **God bless the United States of America.**

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/nbc-s-under-god-omission-prompts-calls-b> NBC said that they wanted to capture patriotism when they aired a montage at the U.S. Open golf tournament June 19 that interspersed images of our military personnel with children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Nice idea, but here's the problem: **The words “under God” and “indivisible” were not included as part of The Pledge.** People began a huge backlash, and NBC was forced to address the issue, saying that “regrettably” a portion of the Pledge of Allegiance had been edited out, but it was not done to upset anyone; and “we'd like to apologize to those of you who were offended by it.” Too little, too late. The people who create these presentations are professionals, and NBC had to approve the finished product. To say that it was a mistake is an insult to the patriotism NBC claims it was portraying. Obviously their view is that it's easier to “apologize” after you do what you wanted to do in the first place. WATCH THE VIDEO AT <http://www.fox19.com/story/14960628/reality-check-under-god-and-the-pledge-of-allegiance>

The next election is closer than you realize, and we cannot sit back and watch. It is important that you keep track of **all** the players—who they align with, what they say, what they do, and how they present and position themselves. Our own state is where we can have the most effect, and we must pay attention, be aware, and keep connecting the dots at all levels—federal, state, and municipal. Most people now realize that it is not only the politicians we have to watch but also the people and organizations they affiliate with—those who can get them into office, keep them in office, or make sure they do not get elected. “Politics makes strange bedfellows,” is oh, so true. They “work with” (USE) anybody they can; and when their purpose has been served, they ditch them and move on. We are already seeing that, and it comes with a price—usually to the taxpayer. These people determine how we live our lives in RI; they raise our taxes; they spend our tax money; they write our laws; they decide what kind of education our kids get. Do not think that “somebody else” is going to stand up for you. We're all trying to survive. You have to get involved.

Have you wondered why there has been so much coverage of reaction to the passage of the Voter ID Bill? Well, recent events may answer some of those questions. Why were some people **stunned**? Did they know something nobody else knew? Did they fully expect something they did not get? Or, is there something else at work here? Are these recent events signaling a split between previously allied groups and laying the groundwork for new political alliances for future elections? Why are some groups so vehemently opposed to showing identification before voting, and how will redistricting affect political maneuvering? Who would gain and who would lose after districts are re-drawn? Some groups seem to be very concerned about redistricting and the possibility of gerrymandering they say could occur. (For the full articles summarized here, go to the websites listed.)

<http://www.golocalprov.com/news/9067/> Governor Chafee signed Voter ID on July 2. He said he had discussed the Bill "with representatives of our state's minority communities, and I found their concerns about voter fraud and their support for this bill particularly compelling." After a "great deal" of reflection, he decided that requiring photo IDs at polling places is a "reasonable request to ensure the accuracy and integrity of our elections."

[http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER\\_ID\\_6\\_07-07-11\\_6BP1PDI\\_v34.34327.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER_ID_6_07-07-11_6BP1PDI_v34.34327.html)  
[http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER\\_ID\\_11\\_07-11-11\\_76P32UU\\_v31.3c4c6.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER_ID_11_07-11-11_76P32UU_v31.3c4c6.html) Rhode Island is the only state of 20 this year to pass Voter ID in a Democrat-controlled legislature according to the non-partisan National Conference of State Legislatures, and Rhode Island's was **bipartisan**. Sponsors included: House Speaker Gordon Fox (D), and Reps. John Brien (D), Joseph Trillo (R) and Doreen Costa (R). Sen. Harold Metts (D) sponsored the Bill in the Senate.

Some of the **stunned** opponents say black politicians who voted for the Bill were trying to protect themselves from Hispanics' growing political power (two longtime black legislators were defeated by Hispanics in the 2010 elections). Physician and Latino activist Pablo Rodriguez, who helped found Latino Public Radio and the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee, which supports candidates of Hispanic or Latino heritage seeking local and state office, believes the black political establishment reacted to a growing Hispanic voting bloc. "The only thing I can think about is that African-Americans are somehow feeling that the growth of the Latino community is a threat to their election. Any politician that lives in Providence has to feel the presence of the Latino community. It does not matter what district he or she is in. And they will feel it more in the next election."

Black lawmakers deny race was a motivating factor. Senator Metts said that both African-American and Latino constituents have complained to him about voter fraud for almost two decades. Rep. Anastasia Williams and her daughter were victims of voter fraud in 2006 when they were told, at the polls, that they had already voted. Rep. Williams, who considers herself both African-American and Latino, said, "This has nothing to do with being African-American and feeling any pinch. To take the issue and make it an African-American versus Latino-American thing is totally, totally a farce. It's sad to even bring that up because there will be individuals that will use that as an excuse."

Tony Affigne, political science professor at Providence College, said he does not believe self-preservation was the primary motivating factor for black politicians to back voter identification. "I do not believe that they are acting because they are trying to game the system," he said of Metts and Williams. **"This city is flooded with fake IDs.** Who believes requiring them will actually prevent vote fraud?"

<http://newsblog.projo.com/2011/07/ri-groups-criticize-chafee-for.html#voteridletter> Fifteen civil rights, community, open government and social service organizations sent a letter to Governor Chafee protesting his signing of Voter ID legislation. They took exception to the governor's comments that he "spoke with representatives of our state's minority communities" and "found their concerns about voter fraud and their support for this bill particularly compelling" and noted that none of their groups, representing a wide array of minority community constituencies in Rhode Island, has ever expressed support for the bill. The letter also said that they recognize that some minority legislators actively supported the bill, **but it is no reflection on them to note that their own understandable vested interests in the electoral process might differ somewhat from minority community organizations on an issue like this.**

Signers of the protest letter to Governor Chafee: Jim Vincent, NAACP Providence; Nick Figueroa, Univocal Legislative Minority Advisory Coalition (ULMAC); Marta Martinez, Progreso Latino; Jim Ryczek, Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless; Chanravy Proeung, Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM); Raymond L. Bandusky, Rhode Island Disability Law Center; Fred Ordonez; Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE); Carolyn Mark, Rhode Island NOW; Kate Brewster, The Poverty Institute; John Marion, Common Cause Rhode Island; Steven Brown, ACLU; Kate Brock, Ocean State Action; Jean Lawler, R.I. Disability Law Project; Martha Yager, American Friends Service Committee; Elizabeth V. Earls, R.I. Council of Community Mental Health Organizations.

[http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER\\_ID\\_LETTER\\_07-15-11\\_M0P6DO0\\_v10.3d818.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/VOTER_ID_LETTER_07-15-11_M0P6DO0_v10.3d818.html)  
The day before signing voter ID into law, Chafee met with sponsors Sen. Harold Metts and Rep. Jon Brien, and Rep. Anastasia Williams, who supported the Bill. Doris de los Santos, Chafee's director of municipal and external affairs and a prominent member of the Hispanic community, spoke with Chafee about voter ID's "implications for the [Latino] community." She said she believes voter ID "will eliminate or minimize any potential for voter fraud," and that from her experience, people from Latin America are used

to providing at least one photo ID to be able to vote. After his meeting with the legislators, Chafee met with Steven Brown, ACLU; Kate Brock, Ocean State Action; Nick Figueroa, ULMAC; and John Marion, Common Cause.

On July 15 Rep. Jon Brien sat in for Dan Yorke, and Rep. Anastasia Williams was his guest. They talked about the continued after-the-fact protesting and criticism of Voter ID from various groups, the letter to the governor from those groups, and a sound bite from Jim Vincent of the Providence NAACP. Rep. Brien said he was most appreciative of Speaker Fox's support, especially because **the Speaker had been under constant, intense pressure from the Democratic National Committee via personal calls from the Chair, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who told him not to pass Voter ID because it would go against the party.**

Rep. Brien called Rep. Williams his "secret weapon" during the House floor vote because she had personally been victimized by voter fraud and, as the last Rep recognized to speak on the Bill, her story destroyed the empty arguments that voter fraud was not a problem and that Voter ID would disenfranchise minorities. **Note:** The person who used Rep. Williams' name to vote also used it to get a passport, and there is an ongoing federal investigation that, she says, goes very deep.

Rep. Williams said the complaining groups are trying to keep the minority community oppressed by claiming they will be disenfranchised, and she questioned whether people speaking for those groups actually represent minorities or represent only themselves and what they want. She had a lot of support from callers who said those organizations do not represent them and had, in fact, insulted them by implying that they could not take care of themselves. Rep. Williams said she interpreted the following statement from Pablo Rodriguez as a threat: ". . . African-Americans are somehow feeling that the growth of the Latino community is a threat to their election . . . And they will feel it more in the next election." And, she was surprised and glad to see that Tony Affigne admitted that "this city is flooded with fake IDs."

**The Secretary of State's office lists key points of Voter ID:** In 2012, the state will accept certain types of identification, including some that do not include a photo. By 2014, the state will require photo identification and will provide a free photo ID to voters who don't have one. Voters who do not have an ID will be able to cast provisional ballots. Mail ballots will not require a voter ID. **Obviously, 1) poll workers will need more training, supervision and oversight in their duties, 2) mail ballots will have to be stringently controlled, checked and protected, and 3) provisional ballots will have to be closely scrutinized.** There are many ways to interfere with the voting process to commit fraud, and there are many organized efforts dedicated to doing just that. **The Secretary of State and the Board of Elections cannot allow "business as usual" in the voting process.** Every step in the process—at every level—must be secure.

**REDISTRICTING.** <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/news/pr1.asp?prid=7476> PRESS RELEASE 6/28/11 New Law Creates Redistricting Commission. Constitutional redistricting has been signed into law. **New district lines could mean a few new faces at the State House when the next election occurs, and it could also mean some legislators will find themselves representing geographically larger or smaller areas than before.** The commission will include four Reps appointed by the House Speaker and two by the House minority leader; four senators appointed by the Senate President and two appointed by the Senate minority leader; three members of the public appointed by the House Speaker and three appointed by the Senate President. The last redistricting in 2002 coincided with a planned reduction in the size of the General Assembly, shrinking the Senate from 50 to 38 members and the House from 100 to 75--**in many cases pitting sitting legislators against each other during the election that year.** Far fewer such contests are likely this time, since the overall number of districts will not change.

[http://www.projo.com/news/politics/content/REDISTRICTING\\_COMMISSION\\_06-10-11\\_C7OIEHL\\_v31.31ffb68.html](http://www.projo.com/news/politics/content/REDISTRICTING_COMMISSION_06-10-11_C7OIEHL_v31.31ffb68.html) If all goes as planned, the Redistricting Commission will start meeting this summer, holding public hearings across the state as it reviews the options for new district lines. The Commission's recommendations are to be submitted to the General Assembly by January 15, 2012, and Assembly members will vote on the new boundaries, which would be in place for the November 2012 election. The Assembly budgeted \$1.5 million for the redistricting--\$692,420 to Election Data Services and approximately \$800,000 reserved for "potential lawsuits." **D'YA THINK?** EDS was the only bidder and also handled our last redistricting.

John Marion, Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island, testified against the redistricting bill before the House Finance Committee, saying Rhode Island's redistricting process leaves the door open to political interference that can lead to **gerrymandering**. He said Rhode Island's process is arguably the

most partisan in the country because authority is placed fully in the hands of the state legislature, and arguably the least constrained because Rhode Island "has the fewest standards" for how the congressional and legislative districts should be formed. <http://blogs.wpri.com/2011/07/12/marion-beware-beware-rhode-islands-coming-gerrymander/>

**FOLLOW THE MONEY:** [http://www.projo.com/news/politics/content/political\\_scene\\_20\\_06-20-11\\_ARAMQI8\\_v23.34134.html](http://www.projo.com/news/politics/content/political_scene_20_06-20-11_ARAMQI8_v23.34134.html) Ken Block's plan to cut fraud seems to be moving forward. He has talked with Steven M. Costantino, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and Charles Fogarty, director of the Department of Labor and Training, and is reviewing a proposed memorandum of understanding with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services that would give him access to state data files. **IF** the plan becomes a reality, he would not be paid for the work and expects that it would begin sometime this summer. Based on efforts in other states that have uncovered anywhere from 10 to 20 percent waste and fraud, Block estimates that Rhode Island could save \$100 million to \$250 million a year in its Medicaid programs.

<http://www.politifact.com/rhode-island/statements/2011/jul/08/gary-sasse/sasse-says-rhode-island-spends-52-percent-more-cap/> On the June 26 broadcast of 10 News Conference, Gary Sasse said that RI spends 52% more per capita on human service programs than U.S. average. (Sasse qualified his "per capita" as enrollees.) In the 2012 state budget, 90% of the \$200 million increase in overall spending is for these programs. RI spends about \$9,300 per capita on Medicaid programs (health care for low-income people), everything from RIte Care to nursing homes. National average is about \$6,100. He said that the question on human services is not necessarily cutting back on eligibility, but looking at what **optional** services we provide. Under **optional**, the federal government includes adult daycare, assisted living for the elderly, and hospice care for the dying. Sasse said that RI has very high residential care costs, and we provide about \$70 million in **optional** Medicaid services that many other states don't provide.

In 2008, according to a February 10 presentation developed by the House Finance Committee (Kaiser Family Foundation), \$294 billion was spent nationally on Medicaid--\$6,120 per recipient (children 19.4%, adults 13.5%, disabled 43%, and elderly 24.1%). RI spent \$1.7 billion (about 52% of that was federal funds), or \$9,341 per recipient (children 13.5%, adults 10.1%, disabled 51.4%).

RIPEC's 2010 "How Rhode Island Compares" report (2008 Census) says public welfare costs (Medicaid and cash payments to the poor), on the basis of state population, were \$2,036 per Rhode Island resident, which is 51.8 percent more than the \$1,341 spent per capita nationally. If you look only at RIPEC's Medicaid numbers, as the House Finance Committee staff report did, per capita spending in Rhode Island is actually 55.8% more than the national average, a bit higher than Sasse said.

To sum up, Sasse said Rhode Island's per capita human services spending--by his definition, Medicaid spending per enrollee--is 52% higher than the national average. By that definition, he's correct. He's also correct in the more common use of "per capita"--spending by population. So we rate his claim True.

R.I.I.L.E. meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Club, 1108 Charles St., North Providence (corner of Remington St. next to Citizens Bank). Parking in rear. Please help us save Rhode Island.

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<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Terry Gorman</b>
<b>Director</b>	<b>Karin Gorman</b>
<b>Writer/Contributor</b>	<b>Kathleen Gudaitis</b>
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Karin Gorman</b>

**RHODE ISLANDERS FOR IMMIGRATION LAW ENFORCEMENT (R.I.I.L.E.)**  
P.O. Box 1, Central Falls, RI 02863 (401) 475-2410  
[www.riile.org](http://www.riile.org) EMAIL: [info@riile.org](mailto:info@riile.org)