THE PLATFORM DOCUMENT

OF

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This document is available on-line along with several other policy documents at www.votehealey.com

INTRODUCTION

While I find it somewhat of a non-issue in my campaign to eliminate the office of the Lieutenant Governor, some have questioned me as to what would happen in the event of the death or incapacity of the Governor prior to the change in the Constitution abolishing the office.

To set minds at ease, I offer the following.

If the Governor should die or become incapacitated after my election but prior to the change of the Constitution, I would, being the Lieutenant Governor, become the Governor of the State of Rhode Island.

If the incapacity were temporary, I would do little to upset the course of the Governor's agenda. If the incapacity were permanent in nature or in the case of a death, I would act in accordance to the principles set forth below.

Although as Lieutenant Governor I would refrain from both taking compensation and hiring a staff, thus saving the state about a million dollars a year, I am ready to perform the sole constitutional duty of ascending to the Governorship should the need ever arise.

That being the case, people have asked me to articulate my platform for being Governor. As you know, under the current system, Governors and Lieutenant Governors are often from different parties, so it is a given that anyone assuming the role of Governor would have a new agenda to bring to the table.

Personally, I have run for Governor on three occasions. While I may not have been the most popular candidate, it has been widely accepted by most political commentators, even my enemies, that I have the intellectual capacity to be Governor. In my previous campaigns for Governor my platform documents and position papers were ever-present. There is hardly a statewide issue that evaded my comment. I even provided an index of my issues so that if I were inconsistent people could point it out without having to spend hours in research.

I have not changed philosophical positions in the last twenty five years. My campaign web-site will be publishing my previous campaign documents so that people can see for themselves that I have had a consistent no-nonsense approach to government.

I acknowledge that should I be elevated to the Governor's office I would face a General Assembly comprised of Democrats and Republicans. It serves as a blessing and as a curse. I have built my political career on having no political ties to the Democrats or Republicans; however, I have always strove to maintain relations with many members of those parties. I have, in short, the knowledge of how politics works without having to kowtow to any party.

An independent Governor cannot rely on party politics. Therefore, he or she must rely solely on being able to take matters to the people. Using the bully pulpit to the ultimate advantage is the only mechanism of survival. But, as compensation, an independent can fashion policy in a manner that is in the best interest of the people and not by what the political leadership demands.

My campaigns have often been exotic and well outside the mainstream of politics as usual, but my interest has never strayed from acting in the best interests of the State of Rhode Island. I know I could have played the game and gone far, but that would merely be to serve self interests. Instead, I chose to be right than to be elected.

As I indicated, I will be placing, unedited, all my campaign materials from previous campaigns on my website, www.votehealey.com. I will take no campaign contributions, and as a result, will be beholden to no one. I write my own speeches, position papers, and press releases. I don't poll and I am not swayed by them. I am as grass roots a campaigner as you are possibly going to get in your lifetime in that I am both qualified and principled.

Finally, in the accompanying document you will get a brief synopsis of my positions on various state related issues. As I stated earlier, these positions have not changed and for those familiar with my campaign, I suggest spending your time in a wiser fashion, but the choice is yours.

My basic philosophical foundation for government is political minimalism. I firmly agree with the old adage that the government that governs the best governs the least. I believe in straight forward capitalism. I am a law and order person given to a stricter reading of the constitution. I believe in the people and therefore, I am a supporter of voter initiative and open government. I am a social liberal and I believe in the right to

privacy, the right to bear arms, the right to abortion, the right to be secure in one's papers and property, along with a far reaching reading of the Bill of Rights.

I also highly regard the statements of George Washington in his farewell address, particularly where he admonishes the people not to have a two party system. I believe in state funded elections with a multiple of party/independent participants. I further think that instant run-off voting is long overdue in this democratic republic.

I am a fiscal conservative and as such I cast a jaundiced eye at almost every spending program. I am not fully libertarian in that I believe that there are some very legitimate functions for government, however, I am strongly against what I see as a cradle to grave totalitarian style socialism in the making. I believe that people are equal and as such need an equal opportunity, but, I find much of our social spending a waste of our communal resources to simply give people fish without teaching them to fish.

Most of all, my policy is "keep it simple, stupid". I believe that the budget should be written to be read on an eighth grade level. I believe that the over-utilization of agency law be curtailed. I believe that work is the best welfare policy and that any government official who fails to appreciate the need for good jobs is an idiot.

In my most cynical moments, I believe that government is an instrument to keep the people oppressed. I find some wisdom in the quote that "the rich give to politicians to allow them to buy the votes of the poor to enable them to keep both groups separated".

I think that there is a great social problem in the breakdown of the family. I find it detrimental that credit is being abused by so many and I find building society on a dream of eternal consumerism to be short-sighted. At times, I find that much of this mess is created by well meaning bureaucrats.

While I am not a feminist, I am not a misogynist. I do, however, believe that the large scale entry of women into the American workforce has caused a detriment to the society that may be beyond repair. This is not to blame the women's movement for claiming what they were rightly being denied, but it is a statement that is largely an indictment of American capitalism.

By increasing the supply of workers, the cost of labor must diminish, according to the basic laws of supply and demand. Our workforce expanded to accommodate these additional workers, but, without expanding the need for work or otherwise limiting the

need for existing labor, the result was a glut in labor, hence a reduction in wages. The ultimate outcome was that the cheapening of labor caused two people to work to support a family that was originally supported by one.

I am not saying that a woman's place is in the home. I grew up in a family where both parents worked – that was a given. But, in my case, as was the case of so many other blue collar children, there were other social support systems in place. There were grandparents living in the home. There were neighbors who shared a concern for the neighborhood. There was individual responsibility.

I write this to demonstrate that our society has lost some of its quality. In the wake of this, government has attempted to fill the void, offering everything from one remaining collection point, the schools. Government, not parents, is raising most of America's children. In our disposable society, government functions as mother and father to the abandoned offspring and sons and daughters to parents who were left behind.

Social workers, not parents, create family norms. Health care professionals see to it that our aged get proper attention. Toffler was correct in his prediction in Future Shock that we will be a throw away society, and we are demonstrating it even with our most prized possessions, our family members.

To quote another famous line, "you can't go back now" is perhaps the best way to describe the situation. Our economics were threatened long before the women's movement in the 60s. In the 20th century America has over relied on warfare to escape economic ruin. World War II, not the social policies of Roosevelt, brought America out of the Great Depression. Suddenly, there was work and the traditional labor force was away in battle.

The war engine kept production high and the shortages of labor kept the country employed. The returning soldiers, in order to keep them from the labor force, were given the GI Bill, to allow them to pursue education, but also to allow for the adjustment of the workforce to meet the needs of a peacetime economy.

Perhaps the worst mistake then made was the widespread removal of women from the workforce. It is here I agree with Betty Freidan. Women were displaced only to foster resentment. Women are, with few exceptions, fungible with men in the workforce.

Therefore, it would have been the more prudent policy to encourage the most capable in the family to become the bread-winner instead of encouraging age-old paternalistic policy to limit women.

Had women been systematically intergrated into the workforce, displacing the lesser efficient males where performance clearly indicated, the less effective bread-winner being left to maintain the functions of a home, then the society would have achieved restricted labor while maintaining a home environment that would serve to nurture a family life and would have maintained a highly skilled and productive work force.

Instead, society chose the more immediate solution, practically banning women from the workforce, foolishly insisting that women would make better care givers than men. Women have a right to complain about the injustice, and to some extent, so do the men.

By government policy, free time and family time was sold to corporate America. The diminution of wages caused by the inevitable return of women to the workforce would ultimately serve as the undermining of the American society.

Enter the creation of the dependent society, and within a few election cycles, sides have been drawn. The Republicans, recognizing that the moneyed class pays well for having its interests represented, focus their interests to serve the wealthier members of society. The Democrats, meanwhile, equally as interested in maintaining their power base, see the utilization and manipulation of the oppressed masses as their meal ticket.

Policy under such a divide becomes driven by special interest and soon derails whatever government logic ever existed for sound policy making. Expansive government policy under Democrat rule is only to be topped by pork projects, tax reductions, and other concessions to the rich under Republican rule. Lost in the mix is the average middle class American.

The vanishing middle class should be a concern to all politicians on all levels of government. But, much like the combat strategy of World War I, both sides are simply entrenched and choose to live in the mire rather than call a truce.

Without a middle class, a capitalist society is largely doomed, and, if that is coupled with the society's reliance on consumerism, the malady is worsened. It is the

middle class that consumes. It is the American middle class that supports government, largely because it is too stupid to be represented by any political heavyweight. These middle class voters are consistently forced by an all powerful self-serving two party system to choose the lesser of two evils in an election. Their government keeps them in debt and entices them with dreams of a brighter future through hard work, yet, that same government is pouring the middle class workers sweat into tax breaks for the rich and giveaways to the poor.

It is within this context that any elected official in the 21st century must act. Foremost is a policy that maintains tried and true formulae. Above all, the middle class must be preserved and expanded. Both the rich and the poor must be put on a diet simultaneously, and not, as the present system provides, one at a time.

Therefore, it is my position that my governance would most likely be a bane to both the rich and the poor but a relief to the middle class. I believe in individual initiative. I believe that tax dollars should not fund private investment. While I am not absolute in this belief, I think that any such application of public funds should be strictly governed and limited. For the most part, all this is just government investment in the private sector is merely psuedo-science.

Policy should be to encourage behavior not to discourage it. Individualism should be encouraged, not thwarted by policy. Taxpayers should retain a larger share of their money and make personal decisions as to what charitable policy they will support. By putting our attention on what we can do to get a short term fix, we ignore what it is that can provide for the true betterment of the commonweal.

People talk about running government as though it were a business. This is good in principle, but laughable in practice. Government is not a business and cannot survive in a true business climate. In business, those who capitulate to terms are losers. It is that simple. To offer tax incentives as a policy is an indication that the prey is already injured. The objective is to make it so that business cannot do without what you have, not to have to meet the needs of business.

Others talk about running government like a military operation. This approach, in a world where no one will take nor follow orders is just too ridiculous to consider as a viable approach.

There will always be taxes, but rarely is there fair taxation. The fact that government has been empowered to redistribute wealth is perhaps the wisest and the most absurd function of government in America. Here again, the middle class person, having to elect a representative from a lesser of two evils format, allows that "representative" to redistribute wealth. This is made even more heinous by the fact that the "representative" is loyal to either the poor or the wealthy.

Electing me will probably not change what politics has wrought, but it will throw a large wrench into the gears. I came from the middle class, albeit lower middle class, and, contrary to the teachings to those who have transcended social class,
I have never stopped thinking middle class. My hatred of party politics is indicative of my distain for pimping for either the rich or the poor.

I may never be elected, but I will die knowing that I have never pandered to the masses. American elections have largely become, as I said earlier, a battle between two extremes. The system, in the name of seeking consensus, allows for choice between political parties that manipulate the rich and the poor but are dependent upon the middle class to get anointed to rule.

Much like Orwell's 1984, the government shifts and what is today may not be what is tomorrow. Society is kept in check by the ever present enemy, Emanuel Goldstien. As one party ascends, the other declines, but both know that it is only taking a turn at pillaging the wealth being produced by the working middle class. Today it is the Republicans, yesterday the Democrats, tomorrow the Democrats again. There is no room at the inn for representation of the middle class.

Middle class members are only courted during elections, and, even then, well within a prescribed dance. The political two party system works to narrow the choices so as to limit the choice to one of two, having manipulated election rules so as to produce only two "viable" candidates. From there, there is an attempt to attract the center, but the reality is that the center is not attracted, simply tolerant. Each side offers trinkets to close the deal, but the reality is that it is all a farce in that the trinkets offered are only a return of money that had been pilfered from the middle class through taxation.

A Republican cut in taxes or a Democrat expansion of a social program is little more than cheap advertisement. The truth is that political promises are merely what one

person will do with someone else's money. Neither political outlook has any real concern for the welfare of the middle class, excepting, of course, to keep it minimally alive so that it can work the fields like a tired bound workhorse. The political parties harbor the middle class only the way ants maintain aphids.

As in 1984, war provides a common bond. Fear, even conjured fear, is a very important weapon in the arsenal. War on drugs, war on poverty, war on crime, war on terrorism, war on AIDS – why can't we all just get along? The answer is that by creating a problem, the government can allocate personnel and resources to fix it. Wars, so created, go on forever.

Consider the war on drugs, a campaign that has cost in the billions. While we are fighting the scourge of illegal drugs, we have legislatures legalizing marijuana for medical use, a legalized drug industry that hooks as many if not more people on prescribed medications, and a populace that has sanctioned illegal use. What are the objectives for winning? There are none. It is merely a cottage industry to provide make work in the society.

Consider the war on crime, another campaign that costs billions. While we are busily putting people in jails and creating more and more punishable infractions, our criminologist understand that crime is really demographically predictable and largely controllable as such. Still, courts, jails, enforcement, all provide employment for a dying industrial power.

Consider the war on poverty, yet one more campaign that costs billions if not trillions. Here, the likelihood of victory is as remote as a two non-multiple birth humans having the same DNA. The enemy is nebulous and can be changed to fit the situation as required by the government. Unless there is a complete redistribution of the wealth, there will always be poverty. Even with a complete distribution of wealth, poverty will resurface as those who cannot manage wealth are once again in need. Still, the war on poverty provides both political cover and yet another way to keep the middle class in bond by a system of wealth redistribution that doesn't appear so on its face.

Government has long ceased functioning for the people, if in fact it ever really did. Personal greed and power have clouded the minds of our elected leaders. Politics is a profession. It is a business. It is self perpetuating like a corporation. As pointed out in

1984, government strives to be eternal through power not people. A monolithic totalitarian society, a society to which our future is being lured, is one that preserves government at the expense of people. It is a human face being stomped on by a boot, forever.

Now, you ask, what does this all have to do with governing Rhode Island? Well, this has nothing to do with governance and much to do with how I would approach governing. There is a Herculean effort required to clean the Aegean stables that symbolize government.

One governs by a philosophy. Campaign speeches and other promises, both in the public and in the back rooms, may manipulate government, but in the end, it all comes down to philosophy. Public policy, if it is to be truly for the good of the governed, needs to be open, fair, and flexible. Like any task, there needs to be a stated objective, a test to determine if that objective has been met, and an ability to revise to meet a subsequent need or to re-examine why the objective cannot be met using the stated method. It is not "rocket surgery".

As Governor of Rhode Island I would work within this stated philosophy to bring about change, to restore a middle class, and to make government efficient, effective and open. Having grown from outside the entrenched system, I am perhaps the only candidate that offers real HOPE for Rhode Island.

THE POLICIES

In a nutshell, here are my visions for the various policy areas of state governance. State power is largely in the areas of education, economic development, law, and public welfare. There are several sub categories, but for the purpose of this discussion, I will limit my scope to these. For more detailed analysis of these issues, including the sub categories, see the postings on my political website.

EDUCATION

State education policy needs make a choice. It must either be formulated around the idea that the school is either the public nexus for all social programs or it must be formulated around the idea that a school is a place for of academic achievement. The all too frequent incursion of government into the schools because it serves as a single community gathering spot is misguided. If we are to expect our schools to intellectually advance our youth, then we must focus on instilling knowledge. If we want the schools to be a one-stop shopping for public programs, then we cannot expect high levels of academic achievement. It is really a social choice.

While it has been more and more incumbent upon the state to perform the role of parent (after school babysitting, suicide prevention, breakfast, lunch, etc.), it has also imposed standards that require academic achievement (No Child Left Behind). Although such parenting via the state may be necessary to further educational goals, the commingling of the two only ensures that neither objective can be successfully met.

Educational achievement is largely governed by socio-demographics. The greatest predictor of education success worldwide is the income level of the father. In the United States, it is the income level of the parents and the educational achievement of the mother (given the large number of single mother head of households). This is only logical. One who has succeeded to greater wealth and social status has an appreciation for the value of education.

Our egalitarian nature tells us that if we make everyone socially demographically equal, we will then have education success, but this is merely a bootstrapped argument.

The concept of education for achievement can only be encouraged through actual personal accomplishment. We must recognize the difference between being offered equal opportunity and equality.

We fail miserably to prepare children for their futures. Years of policies like social promotion have further aggravated the matter. Testing, the new God in education, like yesterday's forgotten education Gods, is not the sole answer. Recognizing a clear educational objective and focusing on the needs of the students is far more productive than complete reliance on a yardstick approach.

Rhode Island and Massachusetts gave birth to the public school movement in the United States and as such there is a great sentiment of support for it to this day. The value of education is beyond debate, but the nuts and bolts of its operation all too often create an ineffective system.

Rhode Island spends among the highest in education compared nationally. In Rhode Island, much of that expenditure goes to labor costs, which, is quite reasonable given the labor intensive nature of the task. However, the evolution of, and the entrenchment of, these labor costs need to be addressed.

When I was the Chairman of the Warren School Committee in the early 1980s, I was often at odds with the educational establishment. Because contractual obligations were funded by local property taxation, I was forced by my elected duty to take a hard bargaining approach to teacher contracts in order to protect those who chose me to be their government representative in matters of education as well as its funding.

Now, two full decades after a teacher strike in Warren, I still see the same inadequacies in the system. I can say first and foremost, I honestly never thought that the teachers in Warren were bad teachers. To the contrary, having worked in the school system as well as having studied under them, I found Warren's teachers to be, with limited exceptions, highly qualified professionals. While at times they considered themselves prima donnas in the work place and cringed at corrective criticism, they were highly effective given the social demographic community they served.

The problem was with the system, namely the local negotiation of the union contract and the eventual method of paying the obligation incurred.

I truly believe that teachers deserve to be well paid. They are highly educated professionals. They shape the minds of the future.

I also believe in the right to have teachers unionized. I have long stated publicly that the teacher union movement in Rhode Island rose from a need to protect the teachers and education from unwarranted political intrusion, nepotism, and work place abuses. I have also lauded those unions for coming into Rhode Island, recognizing the political landscape and learning to play the game of politics better than just about anyone I have ever seen. They recognized that the legislature was the place of power and encouraged members to get politically involved. By flooding the legislature with educators, policies frequently could be skewed to favor their interests. And so, what began in the 60s as a single step of Gandhi has grown into the long march of Mao.

The flaw in the present system is where teachers are pitted against local school committees. Mark Twain was correct in stating that God made monkeys and then he made school boards. Most school committees are comprised of well meaning people dedicated to improving the education of the system, but the road to hell is paved with good intention. Most of these political novices are ill prepared to enter into the ring of contract negotiation with professional buzz saws.

It is here that education in Rhode Island finds its point of friction. Since education funding is largely a local concern, and since locals get tax money mostly from property taxation, the system pits the community against the teachers in a most destructive manner. Couple this with political ineptitude and critical mass is easily within reach.

Union tactics, usually whipsawing communities through comparison with other communities, is an easy sell to the slow marks that make up a local school board. By comparison contracts the responsibility of the school board is abdicated in a most effective way: giving political cover while extracting the benefits. This tactic, used so effectively for years, is probably the largest reason for union opposition to a statewide teacher wage and benefit package.

A recent study of statewide teacher contract possibilities was presented to the General Assembly as part of its budget package a few years back. The conclusion, if one could call it that, was that the savings could be as much as $233.7 million or there could

be additional expenditure of $272 million. The reality is probably more in the middle. A well constructed package could probably be more revenue neutral.

A statewide teacher wage and benefit package, leaving education decisions to the local school board, would probably be a monetary wash, but the social and psychological benefits would prove a boon. Of course, this would mean that funding for such would be largely at the expense of the state as opposed to the locals.

Ideally, the contract would be two years, negotiated and passed by the General Assembly on even (election) years. The General Assembly would set the wages and benefits, kept in check by the upcoming election. Given such, professional negotiation would be the norm for both sides of the table.

Finally, school boards, not having to navigate such treacherous waters, could spend their time improving school policy and have a greater role in education development. It is a win-win as they say in negotiations.

For the individual educators, there is no conflict with the local community and their focus can center on the education of the child rather than the sentiment of the community as to the wages being paid for their services. And, as a final plus, there would not be the September strike scenario. Either the entire state would be on strike or everyone would be going to school.

Turning to education direction, statewide policy needs renovation. The need to have an active Commissioner of Education is imperative. I know this first-hand. While serving on the Chariho De-Regionalization Committee a few years ago, the Commissioner, who by law requested the study, ignored several requests from the Committee to appear before it. That is unthinkable and needs to be changed. If nothing else, the Commissioner of Education must be public, open, and the state's biggest cheerleader in areas of education.

As to the idea of regionalization that is so often bandied about, it is not a panacea. While there are some advantages, there are some drawbacks, and for the most part, the savings would be minimal. Service cooperatives already exist in many parts of the state, as do buying cooperatives. The main advantage would be the elimination of superfluous personnel, but as is the trend now, even small systems are hiring Assistant Superintendents. By consolidating there would surely be changes in names, but the need

for those functions would still remain. Furthermore, there are two strong arguments against such policy. First, is the fact that communities with different socio-economic and cultural differences do not merge well, and second, that education is better when it is locally based, especially in elementary grades.

Needless to say, this then directs the argument to school choice and voucher systems. Both have merit and warrant further consideration, but both are not the answer to the troubles facing Rhode Island's system of universal public education. Private school vouchering, while indisputably an asset to those being vouchered, is off-set by the fact that it would cripple the public school system. A variation of that, having public schools arranged based on achievement and subject matter is a far more reasonable option and one that protects the public's reliance on publicly financed education.

Public education must be maintained to allow for the social classes to transcend socio-economic levels. While it is ludicrous to think that no child will be left behind, it is completely inane to think that public policy should stand as an obstacle to equal opportunity for social advancement.

Still, home schooling and private schooling, for those so inclined, is a benefit to the public in that it forces competition. While there can be endless debates over the issue, the bottom line is that the public system should be able to perform up to its obligation and for those wishing for religious or education reasons to send their child elsewhere, there should be that option. To the extent that option exists, it should be supported in education policy.

Finally, we need to better adjust our system of Higher Education to reflect our direction as a state. We need to determine economic development policy in conjunction with and in anticipation of our education goals. That is, we need to better coordinate efforts to educate our young in the direction our state will be taking in the future.

Think of it this way. Rhode Island has long been a state with a disproportionate number of elderly. It is a given that age breaks down the physical being. It is therefore highly predicable that there will be a strong demand for health care services related to the elderly. Still, after knowing this for years, we do not have enough nursing slots in our universities. And such policy disconnects are abundant. We must coordinate our

education system with our economic development policy. If Rhode Island is going to be dependent on tourism, then teach our middle class to operate in that environment.

Rhode Islanders pay top dollar to educate their children and I believe that this is money well spent. The problem arises when these well educated people have no opportunity to remain in the state after accumulating their knowledge. They form an exodus, a brain drain so to speak. For them, their education will certainly land them a well paying job in an area of the country that lacks a good education system, and as a bonus, they will not be paying taxes to support a quality education system, both here and where they relocate.

If Rhode Island's lively experiment with public education is to survive, we must retain those most qualified to put money into the system. To think that an aging population and a society that lacks a middle class component can support public schools years after their children have left is a wishful thinking. By dovetailing our higher education goals with our economic development objectives, we have at least the chance of success.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rhode Island has long maintained its commitment to drive-by economic policy making. This whimsical whoring ourselves out to whatever economic engine comes along is counter-productive and will not sustain growth.

While the parameters of business do not allow for great certainty into the future, there are ways that can be seen as wise investments and secure policy making. Much like an individual's financial portfolio, the economic development of the state needs to be fashioned with a pre-determined goal utilizing a balanced approach. It is not "brain science", but it is unpredictable.

Rhode Island, through the actions of the General Assembly and the inactions of various Governors, has chosen the method of spending one's way out of debt. This ill-conceived idea works, but not indefinitely, and never achieves the stated goal of getting out of debt.

The fact that the taxpayer can always be tapped for a few more dollars is the driving force behind the policy. Much like the unwise use of credit, the day of reckoning will surely come. In these days of consumer driven economies, the government is exemplifying, if not glorifying, the policy.

Consider it as one would consider personal credit. During the high days, there is money to spend on anything of interest. Folly rules. Nothing is too expensive. Those were Rhode Island's salad days when there was a solid manufacturing base and all round employment.

Then consider the loss of a job. Rhode Island, like most paycheck to paycheck employees, lost most of its manufacturing base. Instead of attempting to save it or take on less desirable work, Rhode Island began to live on credit. Instead of tightening its belt, it expanded its "wasteline".

As it is with most debtors, there is always hope for something to come along to improve the situation. Someone is always offering credit cards to those who are bankrupt. And so the situation worsens, albeit a gradual decline.

Times get tight, but there is a hit here and there to keep things afloat. To the consumer it may be an inheritance. To Rhode Island it is a tobacco settlement or increased tax revenue from cigarettes and gasoline. Whatever it is, it allows for the survival and it makes the world less pressing.

The next step is to begin to believe in the magic of money. To the individual it is a big win in the lottery. To the state it is an increased revenue flow from gaming. When you are down you begin to believe in anything. A drowning person will grasp at the smallest piece of wood while surrounded by ravenous sharks.

Finally, for those who did not win the lottery or take in enough gaming revenue, the gig is up.

Pathetically, the root of much of this is the failure to change behavior in light of the situation. Pride has overcome the individual while ignorance has overcome the state. Both are left penniless and in need of support.

Rhode Island is a state of great potential but has mismanaged its affairs for far too long. Quick fix economic policies, without a corresponding reduction in spending are a

certain recipe for disaster. There are no quick fixes, and, it may well be too late to save the patient regardless how successful the surgery.

There is more than enough blame to go around, but blame does nothing to rectify the matter and may only serve to further evade the requirements of a solution.

In a capitalist society there is production of wealth. In a totalitarian society all wealth belongs to the state for its disbursement. The more the state operates in a totalitarian manner, the less the incentive for the individual to produce wealth. In a capitalist society, wealth production provides growth that can then be taxed.

This is not an exhortation that the rich are the means of success in capitalism. Far from it. It is an observation that it is the working middle class of people that are responsible for the well being of any true capitalist state.

Therefore, if the state is to survive, it must increase the value and commitment to its working class. To promote policies that are an anathema to the working middle class is merely a path to totalitarian rule or revolution. While the first is the more likely outcome, the second is not so far-fetched. I am reminded of my grandmother who would say that the Italians believe that there is no revolution until the belly button touches the back. Maybe so, but the diminution of the middle class may well serve to revolt against totalitarian rule.

So what is a state to do? There is no easy answer. There must be a financial plan in place and economic development goals related to that plan. As stated above, there must be a balanced approach with a goal oriented portfolio.

In my earlier days I was quick to shout out industry based solutions to the problems of economic development. Even today candidates are running on such platforms – biotech research is our future. The reality is that this is just a start, and in most cases, a political gimmick, especially when presented by those who had various opportunities to legislate such a program but failed to do so.

Today, I still believe in industry based solutions, but I don't see them as the sole answer to the problem. Economic development is far more than campaign rhetoric. It is a bold initiative that links goals with spending. It avoids over-reliance on any particular financing vehicle. It requires hard work and determination. And most of all, it is based on public good.

As long as the Legislature can beg, borrow or steal a buck, there will be spending. There is always something that could use more funding. There is always some pet project that needs financial support. The need is infinite, but the resources aren't.

Rhode Island's economy is far too reliant on public sector employment. Traditionally seen as a method to maintain partisan loyalty, public jobs were a means of keeping people employed and loyal. To some extent, such a policy is necessary, but its abuse is the difference between a hog and a pig. Pigs get fed; hogs get slaughtered.

By having people employed by the state there is the obvious advantage that they will be paying taxes to the state instead of being a burden to the state by being on the dole. In really is little more than a bookkeeping trick. Such a policy may work well for combating unemployment but it is disastrous in terms of economic development.

State run bureaucracies have been thoroughly explored, notably in Owell's 1984, and need not be restated here. What does need examination, however, is the extent to which Rhode Island's over-use of such employment hinders its economic development.

By recycling state money, pay to workers who pay taxes to the state, there is no new "goods" being produced. Eventually, slippage will occur and the money is gradually removed from the flow. Its long term prognosis as an economic development policy is nil. It's like kissing your sibling – a whole lot of fun but it gets you nowhere.

Since there is no true solution in the public sector, the obvious alternative is the private sector. But just how does that work? The private sector does hold a reasonable solution, but it cannot be the be-all and end-all in the discussion. Private sector economics, left unguarded, get fashioned by greed and contempt. The solution lies in a middle ground that is about a 75-25 split with a reliance on private over public.

Thus, the objective for economic development by a state should encourage private sector development while not over-burdening it and not over-nurturing it. The state should provide the proper climate conditions and occasional weeding. The growth is left to the private sector.

Too often politicians talk in favor of economic policies by saying the state must nurture the project, if the politico is in favor the proposal. Contrarily, if opposed to it, the politician mouths the language of regulation and protection. Both do a disservice to their

constituency and the state. Using such arguments to gain political points ducks the issue of economic development.

Business people are whores, perhaps on a level of a politician. They are not interested in much more than the dynamics of a good deal. The true business person is out to maximize the invested capital, plain and simple.

In days past, the politician served as the brake to the business person's unbridled capitalism. Today, the two share the same bed. Government regulation has become a hodgepodge of unreadable, unworkable, and unproductive mumbo jumbo. Special interests are served in place of public good. In return, political campaigns are funded.

Economic development policy must not lose sight of regulation when seeking a suitor, but it cannot use its policy to shun the potentially lesser attractive mate. The secret lies in moderation or logic, whichever you prefer. By deciding that the economic interests of the state lie in a particular vein, all the power of government is needed to be focused on the mining of the ore.

Let's take tourism for example. We have become quite reliant on tourism, an industry that is notoriously fickle. If the industry is as strong as economic data would indicate, then why is there a need to subsidize hotel building and conversion? The answer is that either the data is being massaged or the people are being had in the name of economic development.[1]

This example allows for consideration of both good policy and bad policy. The good policy would be, assuming the data to be correct, to let hotel builders compete without government subsidy. If there is a need and a private investor wishes to serve that need, then there is a match. The state has provided the climate and it is incumbent upon the private sector to produce.

Instead, we have policy makers who, standing on the argument that by subsidizing hotels we can then increase tourism. This dated approach of "if you build it they will come" has never really proven itself.

[1] When haircuts are included in tourism figures based on the fact that some people get their hair cut while on vacation, the numbers become slightly suspicious. Given the number of Arthur Angelo alumni in Rhode Island, the number becomes even more questionable. Figures don't lie; liars figure.

Additionally, we have the example of Newport, the tourism gateway to Rhode Island, encouraging tourism by charging a one dollar disembarking fee to passengers on ocean liners. This served, and rightly so, to send the tourist to Fall River/New Bedford.

Tourists are expectant of being gouged, but find small annoyances such as the dollar tax to be unbearable. Think of the smarter approach used by the Turnpike and Bridge Authority for crossing the Newport Bridge. A single token is two dollars. A roll of ten tokens can be purchased for ten dollars. The tourist going to Newport from the south will not likely purchase a ten dollar roll for trips over the bridge and back, and so pays four dollars. But, the tourist could buy the roll for ten dollars, taking eight tokens back to who knows where for use who knows when. Meanwhile, the locals can make the same trip for half the price. It is that innovative thinking that is good policy.

Therein lay the art of making successful economic development policy. If the private sector participant is enticed not bribed or browbeaten, there will be good state oriented economic development.

Paying to play is sometimes useful, but to rely on that as the sole tool is not good policy. As the old saying goes, when your only tool is a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail. The same holds true in economic development.

This 'pay to play' method is often successful and should not be completely discounted. That said, however, such a system is only successful in situations where it is utilized in conjunction with cost cutting on the spending end of the budget. Since Rhode Island has shown no desire to cut its spending, these give-aways in return for future gain will only serve to sustain an ever growing budgetary appetite.

Like anyone in need of earning some cash, the first step is to ask what is it that I can do or will do better than the next person. Where does the talent rest? If that can be identified, steps can be taken to bolster that skill. For the people of Santa Poco in <u>The Three Amigos</u> it was sewing. For Rhode Island it is gerontology and oceanography.

Years ago, when running for Governor, I touted utilizing the fact that we are gerentologically challenged. With the aging baby boomers, the future would be in medical treatment of the elderly. We could both use our resources to attend to the elderly of Rhode Island while making it a laboratory for gerontology.

Also, economic development cannot limit itself to what is. It must be willing to consider options outside the box. Another proposal I had offered eight years ago was to capture the import/export service market to Brazil and the rest of South America. That market was showing signs of growth. We have a population that is fluent in Portuguese and Spanish. We were a natural. Instead of locking ourselves into a business that would be hard to relocate, we worked on the financial institutions, a sector of the business world that is capable of operating anywhere a telephone exists.

Business people are shoppers. They will go where the best deal exists. If we use taxpayer dollars to subsidize their private sector operations, they have succeeded. It is that simple.

Business people, while shoppers, are also keenly attuned to the idea of looking at the bigger picture. Given a good business climate, a responsive government, a reasonable level of taxation and an educated populace, a business will forego the quick fix and will more likely stay put where others would bail.

Many businesses have learned hard lessons in moving. Think of the wool industry up north that relocated south to take advantage of the low overhead enjoyed by cotton producers. The reality is that while cotton can be processed in warm weather, wool processing in warmth is far more complicated. Thus, wool faded while King Cotton made its Phoenix-like rise from the ashes.[2]

Consider the case of the factory that moved operations from Rhode Island to Mexico to get wage concessions. The amount of time required to educate the workforce to use the fine tuned machinery ate up much of the savings, and the misuse of the equipment and lack of maintenance ended up costing more than leaving production where it was.

People in business learn from the misadventures of others. People in business create wealth on the misadventures of others. Attracting business for economic development is not hard. Attracting business for economic development on favorable terms for the state is difficult.

[2] Although there is also an argument that the suppression of hemp, a relative of marijuana without its drug properties, was the victory that gave cotton growers a decided edge.

And so it comes to, what is the solution? The answer is about as nebulous as the question. Given Rhode Island's lack of budgetary integrity, the solution currently used is to 'tread water'. This will serve Rhode Island today, but will severely limit its future.

What Rhode Island needs to do is a different story. It needs to reconsider its spending priorities, cutting out the fat and trimming where possible. It needs to review and amend its taxing system to make it more commercial friendly, not rich person friendly. It needs to articulate a policy for economic development growth and have all parts of state government working off the same page to make it happen. It needs to consider what it has to offer and direct funds to make it a reality.

Recently, a bill was introduced to allow in-state tuition rates for illegal aliens in Rhode Island. While noble in its goals, the expenditure by the state on non-citizens, could be utilized far more wisely by pushing the University of Rhode Island to hire world eminent professors in a field determined to be in Rhode Island's future economic development plan. By attracting out of state students to come to the University the state makes money to then consider subsidizing non-citizens. To put the cart before the horse is just one more example of bad economic development in Rhode Island.

Good economic development policy is not Democrat or Republican. A Republican business interest would just as soon screw the state as would a Democrat interested in using the public funds to enhance political support through social programs. Both should be acknowledged for what they are – political attacks on the state coffers.

As is always the case, opportunities abound. As is always the case, those with the ability to act on them are the winners. Good policy includes good government. Stupidity in government affairs is easily recognized by business people. Economic development, like charity, starts at home.

LAW

Another duty of state governance is to maintain and protect the integrity of the state and its laws. As such, the Governor serves as the chief enforcement officer of the state, aided by the Attorney General who serves as the state's prosecutor.

Through recent years the system of governance in Rhode Island has been rocked by scandal. Politicians, engorged on their own success, have been exposed and prosecuted criminally.

Open meetings have become increasingly commonplace. Public records, aided by computerization have been made available on an ever growing basis. The Secretary of State and the General Assembly have web-site access to matters of state and the Courts have been working in a similar vein. The Ethics Commission has taken a place as a fourth branch of government.

Still, Rhode Island can build on these successes in government. A strong voter initiative process would curtail much of the legislative game playing. Better regulation of special interest influence in election and lobbying efforts wouldn't hurt. And of course, there is always a need for election reform. And the abuse of the patronage system could stand a good objective inspection.

From a criminal enforcement perspective, it is time to consider its policies. Having spent many years in the courts in Rhode Island, I am all too aware of the need to reform our criminal justice system to where it better serves society. The fault here is not entirely with the Judiciary, but with the Legislature.

The over-criminalizing of society to show a tough stand on law and order for election day has overburdened the courts and the prison system, encouraging disrespect from the very people it is meant to correct.

On any given day in the District Court one can observe a long line of offenders. Statistically, many are recidivists. Statistically, most of their criminal behaviors fall upon the poorest sector of the society. Statistically, most will not serve a maximum sentence for their actions.

Our prison population is high. We utilize alternative sentencing with far too much regularity. We release people to return to the life of criminal activity. We have created a monster in the name of law and order.

Where government creates a need, there will always be bureaucrats to work to fill it. This is our prison industry. Surely we need prisons, and surely we need to respect and protect those who serve as our agents in dispatching this dirty work. But to incarcerate is a societal admission of defeat.

A large percentage of the prison population is jailed related to drug offenses. For drug criminals, the need to support a habit eventually turns into fraud of some variety, breaking and entering or some other version of theft. It is illogical to state that by eliminating the drug laws such behavior would end, but it is true that it would reduce it.

Due to the de-institutionalization movement that began in the 60s, governments released thousands of patients on the premise that they were not dangerous to self or others. Many of these lacked the coping skills required to simply exist, and soon found themselves re-institutionalized, only this time in a prison setting.

Criminalization of behaviors have brought more people before the courts, but in an attempt to ease the stress on the system, probation and suspended sentencing have become the norm in all but the most serious of offenses. Warrants go un-enforced. The court just keeps churning.

The civil side is not much better. Small claims procedures, once thought of as being the judicial savior for the masses who couldn't afford to retain an attorney, have only a reasonable likelihood of success. Evictions and bill collection actions are pages of the civil calendar on any given day. And the system still keeps chugging along.

Meanwhile, in the Superior and Supreme Courts, more and more agency decisions are being upheld because the courts feel that the Executive branch can do its job without having to waste the court's time in learning the facts and deciding the case.

The idea of tort reform, not overly needed in Rhode Island, known for its stingy verdicts, still could serve as a carrot for industry with little cost to Rhode Islanders seeing that its juries rarely return high awards. Perhaps the most innovative solution here would be to allow for punitive damage awards that go to the state rather than to the plaintiff and its attorney would be an all round win, but to date, such is spitting in the wind.

Judicial corruption has subsided, but this is more likely due to the fact that the exposed were pilloried than due to the reforms in the judicial nominating process. Those reforms merely shifted the process from friends of the legislature to friends of the bar association.

For the most part, as a practitioner in the courts, I find the judges to be, on a whole, a respectable lot. While I often disagree with their reasoning in decisions, I find

that they are capable and competent, although the decision in the Williams matter was clearly finagling with law to suit the facts.[3]

The unwillingness of the Supreme Court to clearly interpret the Rhode Island Constitution is often troubling, but they have been given their authority by law and lifetime appointment and so there is no sense of crying over this spilt milk.

While I do find the judicial selection process to be inside baseball, I find that they are serving up people who are qualified to sit on the bench. Still, I am in favor of a judge's review by election every ten years, excepting the Supreme Court. Any judge would confirmed by the Senate would automatically be vested in the pension system and the review election would be unable to alter compensation rights previously granted the judge standing for review. The only issue is whether or not the judge shall be retained for active duty on the bench. While it is short of electing judges, an idea that I believe would foster corruption, it does force the judiciary to be more responsive to the public which it serves. Since we will be paying for the judge whether on the bench or voted off, it is unlikely that the public will oust many sitting judges, but it will serve as a guard against a bad apple dispensing justice, a check and balance if you will.

Finally in matters judicial, I am a firm believer in a constitutional amendment to allow individuals to seek judicial redress for rights granted them under the constitution. A series of cases have held that Rhode Islanders may only seek redress for constitutional right violations if there is General Assembly authorization to enable such litigation. While the Attorney General may sue on behalf of the citizen, the citizen can be non-suited for lack of standing. This is absurd and needs attention.[4]

As for matters related to the legislature, there are some issues of concern, but it is incumbent upon the membership to clean their house. I believe in a separation of powers, and it cuts two ways. I find it absurd that the judiciary allows executive agencies to hear matters without de novo review. I find it equally absurd that the executive Lieutenant Governor takes duty assignments from the legislature. Separation of powers?

[3] The issue was whether the Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court could accept a commission to a federal judicial panel. The Rhode Island Constitution was rather explicit on the matter, but the remaining member of the Supreme Court reasoned their way around it.

[4] Former Supreme Court Justice Robert Flanders has written much on this topic, and he is right.

The matters related to the legislature that would come into public comment on policy are largely related to the function. I do not believe in term limits for legislators. Term limits are fine in an executive branch, but there is a distinction made when it comes to legislators. Given that in a normal legislature, there would be a single voice in many, the more historical perspective the better.

It may be prudent on the surface to limit the leadership positions by term limitation, but that would only be a ruse. The powerful coalitions that make a speaker powerful would not be diluted. Thus, it is an exercise in futility that appears to be in the name of good government.

I believe that the legislature should remain part time. I think that in the off year it should meet only to pass a budget. The current flood of inane legislation is a testament to the lack of real legislative meat.

This turns to elections and the voting process. It is here that there is a need for reform. There needs to be reform in campaign financing and there needs to be serious consideration of instant run-off elections.

As for campaign financing, there should be a state funded system that completely funds the campaigns for state office to all candidates qualified to the ballot. By choosing to participate in the system, candidates receive funding. Failure to participate will cause zero state funding to the person or political party. In this manner, elections will not be susceptible to being bought and sold by special interests. An individual candidate could choose to forego state funding and rely on his or her First Amendment rights to free speech, but if the penalty runs to the party as well, then the political party will need to consider whether or not its endorsement is worth the jeopardizing of all state funds.

If such a system were in place, I could support higher thresholds for access to the ballot. Barring such a system, the present ballot access is adequate but not ideal.

Also worthy of consideration is the conditioning of granting political party status to any party that runs a statewide candidate other than Governor. Perhaps a twenty percent threshold would be appropriate. While I do not find this imperative, it would do much to bring other political options into the mix. Having once enjoyed political party status, I would have to say it isn't worth fighting over, but there are Libertarians, Greens,

Reforms and others out there who might find such status helpful to equalizing a playing field in elections.

Lastly, I think that it is time to revamp our voting process to allow for instant run-off voting. What this does is allows for people to vote for their candidate without having to handicap the election and can eliminate the expense of primaries. For example, if there are four candidates for Governor, A,B,C and D. You can vote for one or for a first choice, second choice, and so on. Each vote is weighted so that a first vote is worth the number of candidates in the race, and each lower choice is reduced by one.

Thus, using the example, candidate A receives 5 votes as first choice, 2 votes as second choice, 2 more as third choice and 1 as fourth choice. The vote total for candidate A would be (5x4)+(2x3)+(2x2)+(1x1) for a total of 31. Candidate B receives 3 votes for first choice, 6 votes for second choice, 1 vote for third choice and no votes for fourth choice. Candidate B then would have a vote total of (3x4)+(6x3)+(1x2) for a total of 32. While it would immediately appear that the person with the most votes lost, the reality is that the person with the greatest support in the electorate won. In short, 9 people thought that Candidate B was a choice for first or second spot while only 7 thought the same of Candidate A.

While it may appear confusing, it really is nothing more than a way to give people the opportunity to express their preference in voting. The Nader factor is perhaps the best example of this. While many people may have considered or even supported him for President, the fear of voting for a pre-determined loser diminished, if not preempted any chance of him winning. Their vote for Nader, a Democrat alternative, would result in a decisive victory for the Republicans. In 2006 Rhode Island, consider how it would be in the multi-personality race for the U.S. Senate.

By presenting the electorate with a take it or leave it slate of candidates, it is little wonder people don't make a serious effort to vote in elections. They don't care and their vote doesn't count for what they believe in. In fact, by voting they merely vindicate the mistaken perception that they are in favor of a candidate with which they find little merit.

What instant run-off election does is allows for a consensus in a crowded field, while also allowing one to vote for the candidate of choice instead of a candidate to block another from winning. Obviously, in a two person race dominated by a two party system,

this would work as well, but it works especially well when applied to races that have more than two candidates on the ballot.

Finally, by adopting instant run-off the need to hold political primaries at state expense would be eliminated. All candidates could run for office provided they get the requisite signatures. In this case the entire electorate gets to consider the entire slate of candidates and choose accordingly. Political parties could still endorse candidates, but all candidates would reach the ballot.

The technological advances in voting have allowed this to be done. The tabulation of the votes, having them appropriately weighted, could yield an immediate outcome. Furthermore, it would give people the opportunity to freely express their preferences among the candidates. This is by far the most innovative and equal method of having a "winner take all" election. Likelihood of success in being adopted by the party entrenched General Assembly? Zero.

Another item that has potential and my support is a line item budget veto to allow for the Governor to adequately convey which parts of the budget are at issue. The present system of take it or leave it is a sure-fire mechanism to initiate political fire fights which are needless and derisive.

And while speaking of gubernatorial power, the Constitution should be amended to remove the power of the Governor to make any lame duck appointments that go beyond his or her term in office. This would not apply to any position that requires Senate confirmation.

Finally, while somewhat ambivalent about the topic, I still think that it is in the best interests of the people to return to a two year election cycle for statewide office. I must admit that while I am growing more comfortable with it, it should be given equal footing with the legislature and I am strongly opposed to moving that to a four year term. Therefore, I must conclude that a two year term for statewide office would be better government in that it keeps the elected officials on task. Besides, we have to hold general elections every two years for the legislature and so there would be only nominal costs associated with such a process.

Now we turn to the budget and the budgeting process. The first item that needs review is the need to produce a budget that is clear enough to be read by an eighth grader,

or at least a high school graduate. Hidden items, incomplete personnel descriptions, and other ploys do not make for good government. People need to know how their money is spent and be able to account for it.

While a budget deficit is indicative of overspending, a rainy day fund is equally indicative of overtaxing. Neither is conducive to good governing, but I still would prefer the state to be in the latter position. A pay as you go approach to government is the most logical. An established rainy day fund of 50 to 100 million dollars would not be such a bad concept.

Funding for pension obligations and other such expenditures need to be current. Underfunding of such obligations is merely transferring the problem to a future generation. It is unacceptable as policy and moves should be made to attempt to correct these wrongs.

Other ideas for contemplation would be complete disclosure by publication in a simple easy to read format of all state leases and contracts for services, restrict gaming revenues to ear marked accounts, consider broadening the peoples' power of recall, and the restriction on powers granted to quasi-public agencies.

If allowed to think unbridled, the list could certainly take on at least fifty to one hundred more items. Suffice it to say that these items are where my interest would center if I were to ever assume the office of Governor.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE

And finally, I speak to the issue of public welfare. The good of the whole, having the burdens shared equally and all that overlooked part of the Rhode Island Constitution.

While the Legislature has a much larger role in these matters, the Governor, through the bully pulpit of the office can impact on the decision making process. The veto power is where the Governor can draw the line in the sand. The Legislature imposes and the Governor disposes.

Much of this is related to the state's role in conjunction with local governments and is concentrated in areas of taxation, health care, transportation and land resources. The Governor, therefore, must state the vision in these areas.

As for taxation, there is serious need for revision. Rhode Island is a tax mecca. The property taxes, cigarette taxes, income taxes, gasoline taxes, sales taxes, restaurant taxes, corporate taxes, and the fees for services, and, if one considers gambling a tax on the poor, then that too. The old saw, Rhode Island has never met a tax it didn't like, holds true.

With all this income one would think that Rhode Island would be debt free, hardly. Rhode Island is currently running budget deficits that have been estimated in the neighborhood of a quarter billion dollars or more. We even pre-spent our share of the tobacco settlement. What's left to sell? Isn't the state whoring now?

What's wrong with this picture? Too much spending? Tell your legislator the next time you go to see him or her about some legislative grant you want for your pet project.

The raiding of the public trust has long been a problem with the tax situation in Rhode Island. And as long as the bills keep coming in, there is less and less hope for real tax relief. While there are several politicians this year claiming to reform property taxation, there are few that have claimed spending reduction. By simply calling for reduction in one area, without a reduction in spending, is pushing on one side of a balloon only to have the other side expand.

The saving grace for most Rhode Islanders is that the property values have risen significantly, but like any market, that is a bust and boom cycle and really has little effect on the locals, except, like their government, they can borrow against their future. If increased debt is the solution, then Rhode Island is ahead of the curve. Otherwise, we are on a path to self destruction, or, at the very least, a long painful sobering up.

Like public welfare, the solution is to create work. The state must seriously consider working to produce a revenue stream. Increasing taxation is not a serious possibility at this point.

We are already over-reliant on gaming, and that is even before the issue of the tribal casino. If Lincoln and Newport don't fork over the funds each week, the State of Rhode Island couldn't make payroll. Am I the only one seeing where this is leading?

Talk about voodoo economics or smoke and mirror budgets, Rhode Island has them beat. The next five years in Rhode Island will, undoubtedly be the most difficult for management of funds.

A politician will tell you that this is no problem. A realist will tell you that it is almost impossible to come out of this without pain and suffering. I honestly see no easy answer to the problem I describe here. I wish it were different, but it ain't.

Faced with such a predicament, I would have to resort to a triage budget formulation – cuts are inevitable. I would make a higher emphasis on the economic development plan that could be used to create jobs in a faster time frame. I would seek to stimulate markets by public necessity projects where appropriate. I would consider one time elimination of certain exemptions. I would look at something to stimulate tax collection from deadbeats. All of this, however, cannot substitute for actual and real growth in the economy.

We are putting fingers into a leaky dam, that's all. When some part of the revenue stream is unexpectedly higher we quickly glom it to patch a budget hole. We fail, that is, we consistently fail, to make any real effort to fix the problem. We are a bunch of Okies just trying to keep everything together so that we can make it to California and redemption.

Bread and circuses are always pabulum for the masses in times of misery. Keep the people in the dark, prey on their inability to act, and just keep giving them bread and circuses to prevent revolt. The budget needs to be both realistic and fair, but any attempt to reach this needs to transcend politics and the traditional sniping. The only advantage I may have in this is that I can incur the ire of both the Republican and Democrat quarters without spending or earning any political capital.

In terms of health care, there is little doubt that policy must work for universal coverage. But this is fraught with a special interest nightmare. If health care reform doesn't include a review of doctors, hospitals, insurance carriers, and even malpractice

attorneys, then the plan is little more than a quick fix to last until the loser gets a better lobbying force.

Medical care is costly as a result of many factors. If doctors weren't in it for the cash, they'd be social workers. If insurance companies weren't in it for the profits, the costs could be reduced. If the politicians weren't in it for the contributions, the problem would be adequately and fairly addressed.

Doctors often line up with Republican interests; malpractice lawyers with the Democrats. Health care insurance carriers are like the public bicycle.

People can talk about what is needed, but the long and short of it is simple and practical, and therefore, almost unlikely to get passed into law. No one with a dog in this fight wants to give up any ground. The answer then must be crafted along the wisdom of Solomon, the King not the former General Treasurer. There must be a carving up of the baby.

Since the state is primarily responsible for most of the health care costs, it would seem that the state may be the answer to its own problem. If we look at the health care offered to employees of the state and municipal governments, along with their spouses and children, the people on RITE care, the numbers that are on other support services out of the Department of Human Services, along with all the other programs that include health care, it seems that universal coverage is nearly here.

What we are actually talking about is the privately insured and the working middle class that has no coverage because they are using the money for taxes and food. The interesting point here is that the middle class is the most likely to lack health care coverage and yet it is the overtaxed middle class that is making health care available to the poor and subsidizing the health care of the rich.

The secret here is to use the existing fabric to extend the security blanket. The reality is there is treatment even without health coverage. The bottom line is that the hospital or treating facility will sue the patient into bankruptcy, but the person will receive treatment. Further, if the patient qualifies, the state picks up the tab. Finally, if the person has insurance, the carrier covers it. So the health care crisis is really only a crisis of allocation not of medicine.

A second point to realize is that some of what we require can be shifted to make the coverage possible. For example, if the state were to subsidize the health care of all its residents, it could utilize its worker compensation payments (except for death and permanent injury settlements). The savings would act as an off-set. Further, by setting up options to emergency room treatment, the costliness of health care could be streamlined.

Managed accounts may also work. A person can accrue money in a medical account that if unused, can be transferred or settled out for a nickel on the dollar every five years or ten cents at death. There would be some incentive to save, treat, or bank the funds for loans to family.

Other considerations could include statewide immunization programs for free, fund early screening and detection programs where practical, give certain safe harbor procedures for medical professionals, cap malpractice awards, consider state owned insurance pool, and immediately set the several groups to work to find a solution lest an unappealing one be applied to them.

Finally, as discussed in the section on economic development, it is most important to incorporate health care into the future of Rhode Island. By investing in economic development in innovative health care, we can both service our needs and gain in economic ways at the same time.

If there is any real solution in health care, it is to get the politicians to either fully get in or fully get out of the business. Since the latter is unlikely, the former may be an undesired yet unavoidable option.

A third area of concern for Rhode Island's Governor would be the sector that is involved with transportation. This area would include roads and bridges, registry of motor vehicles, RIPTA, sea lanes, and related items. Transportation is important to any state, although the state's role in this area is largely overshadowed by the impositions of federal law effectuated through the state's acceptance of federal tax dollars.

Rhode Island would be a ideal location for public transportation given its size and urban concentrations, but, given Rhode Islanders' aversion to public transit, need for a place to put a vanity plate, and the relatively inconvenience of public transit, the people have continued to use it as the vehicle of last resort.

This battle to instill public transit in Rhode Island is a worthy objective, but it is one that lacks priority in a state that is awash in other more pressing problems. When the state is facing matters that may require the amputation of a leg, it is not so important that the toenail is in-grown.

Most Rhode Islanders have never spent much time in parts of the world where public transit is a viable and working option. To Rhode Islanders the move is to the suburbs and mass transit is just not compatible. If you have a car, you drive it. The public could be moved to use RIPTA (I disagree with their recent study), but it would need commitment to a long-term plan that would guarantee funding for a decade.

Where mass transit is most effective is where the cost of owning a car is dramatically off-set by the cost of public transit or where peoples' time is cheap. Rhode Island has neither of these two situations that would natural force people to public transit, therefore, any use in Rhode Island would have to be artificially created (e.g. concern for the environment, high parking taxes, etc.) or severely subsidized. Both are political wars that are inconsequential at the present.

If the strong commitment to public transit is not undertaken, then it is wise policy to maintain the highway system. While most of Rhode Island is already built, the suburban sprawl will extend to the western part of the state. New roadways in the settled portions of the state are not likely. This means that the congestion that currently exists will not get much better. But not all is bad. Since most of the congested areas are unlikely to have any great influx of people, the numbers will not likely grow to any great degree.

It is always good policy to maintain what has already been bought and paid for. Therefore, bridge repair and road maintenance need not be shorted even during the toughest of times. This brings up issues related to prevailing wage, but in a tight spot, everyone has to give. When times are hard, Davis-Bacon doesn't feed many.

Nothing pisses off Rhode Island taxpayers more than hitting a pot hole. Why this has never sunk in to the deep skulls of the politicians is beyond me. How hard is it to fix a pot hole? Get the best stuff, fix it as often as it occurs, keep a list and pay attention to where they traditionally occur. Fix, re-fix, and fix again. Set up a reporting system. This is as important, if not more, than knowing there is an accident on Route 295. Have a

state-local relationship that targets this concern. This is one simple area where a great deal of good will can be purchased cheaply.

The second thing that pisses off Rhode Islanders is the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Again, for the life of me, I don't know why every Governor I ran against since Ed DiPrete has promised an effective and efficient registry and has not delivered. Lines still abound and tension causes a negative aura. Even if one has a reasonable experience at the registry, they excuse it as a once in a lifetime occurrence incapable of replication. I am not sure that this is a problem that can be solved given the scope of the operation and the fact that just about everyone over the age of sixteen has some contact with the agency, but this is another area that needs attention.

I recently registered a car in Uruguay and found almost the same bureaucratic set-up. There were lines, people sent back for more paperwork, and the like. I am not sure whether to think that all registry operations are the same around the world or whether Rhode Island is no better than a semi-developed nation.

A fourth subject area for consideration is land resources. Rhode Island has an obligation to protect open spaces and water resources. These areas have long been a part of the policy of statewide concern from the early efforts in the 60s to purchase land for preservation and Rhode Island has consistently passed bond issues for land preservation.

But land management goes farther. The general policy is determined statewide, but most of the enforcement of land issues goes to the individual municipalities. Growth in these communities is largely dependent upon what the local municipalities choose for regulation tools.

Rhode Island's population has been relatively stable and one of the few states where there was no growth or decline. This speaks to the issue that there is a limitation on the amount of growth being allowed as well as the economic factors that would also limit growth. Since much of this policy, restriction on expansion, raises land prices in the world of supply and demand, the cost of housing in Rhode Island is somewhat artificially high, and so policy must address the need to provide for more affordable housing without exploitation of our lands.

The control on land and growth is also impacted by the need for drinking water and water protection in general. There has been a longstanding effort to rejuvenate and

maintain the ocean aspects of water. We have been increasingly diligent in making sure Narragansett Bay is well protected from pollutants, but there is much to be done. And that line cannot be relaxed due to budgetary shortfalls. The bay provides much of the backbone for the tourism industry in Rhode Island and to degrade it would eventually destroy that area of economic development.

The other water issue is more pressing. That is the availability of clean drinking water. Rhode Island's water supply is largely surface water due to the lands make-up. This surface water source of water makes it very susceptible to run off and the general pollutants that fall from the air only to eventually get washed into the water supply. Thus, the issue of pollution goes not just to water, but to the air.

Much of this comes from the industrial parts of the country, brought to us by the air streams that pass the state. This, along with the need to preserve watershed areas, is quite important for state vigilance.

And, no discussion of general welfare would be complete without a word or two on the issue of emergency management. In this post 9-11 world, there is much concern about crisis management, but, as our present ability to read this testifies to, we are usually a state of survivors.

Hurricane preparedness, blizzard preparedness, and other forms of civil defense should not be ignored, but there is much more needed to function today. We must be ever-vigilant, but never afraid. Fear mongering should be limited. The watchword is preparedness.

As such, we should have accurate and adequate signage. We should have designated and supplied facilities. We should keep our inventories adequate in terms of food and water (rotating supplies to our soup kitchens). We should consider all expenditures related to need and not because the funding is available. In short, we should have a plan designed for social safety and not for an employment safety net.

Undeniably, in times of crisis, the Governor is the most important person. And that is as it should be, but ask of yourself how many crises did we face in the last twenty years? The blizzard of 78 style emergency is rare albeit non-existent. Thus, we cannot be caught asleep at the wheel, but to contend that this should be the driving force in policy making is somewhat miscalculating.

Disasters happen. Being prepared obviously aids in the relief. To ignore preparedness is inviting widespread devastation and death. That said, we need a policy that is effective and one that is understood by the people. To date, Rhode Island is woefully inadequate in terms of having educated its people. The bottom line is that in a crisis, most will survive, but we could have always have done better.

The next role of government is to protect its people. Rhode Island has a well established and generous safety net to provide for those in need. Our public assistance policies are quite liberal and the benefit programs available are a substantial portion of the budget.

While this is largely the province of the Legislature, the Executive branch should engage in the process to ensure that the money is being adequately, appropriately, and reasonably well spent. For this reason, I favor having the Governor line item veto, thus leaving the justification for such spending to the legislature through an override.

Further, because of the way the system is funded, there are many problems facing anyone who wishes to implement reform. The fact that much of the safety net is symbiotic makes outright cutting next to impossible. This is an important point for the Executive to understand. This requires that the Executive branch get involved in understanding the whole process and not just seeing it from an economic vantage point.

The cutting of in-home nursing services will have an impact on the system in a domino-like effect. By taking people out of homes to put them in care facilities may not be logical, feasible, and humane. But, on paper such an idea may seem reasonable.

Since the Legislature is primarily responsible for the creation and maintenance of such public programs and their funding, it is best to have them justify it through the process set forth above, the veto and override. Unless and until the Executive branch is willing to insert itself with a strong, logical program of reform, the here and there tinkering is merely a means of antagonizing the legislature and the policy stake holders.

What a Governor can do is to devise reasoned options to present to the legislature. The Governor can create a better economic development climate (a job is the best welfare reform program). The Governor can effectuate public policy in a manner that causes a full examination of the system. The Governor can work to provide leadership in education and health care that reflect the state's people. While a Governor may do all of

this, the credit will largely fall to the Legislature, but if a Governor wishes to be in the interest of the state and its people, such crediting is unnecessary. You do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Additionally, the Executive branch may have one other effective tool in this parlance. The idea of equitable and honest enforcement. By taking the fraud that exists in these types of programs and eradicating it, the Executive branch is doing its elected duty. The working middle class that supports these give-aways are resigned to their existence. Those who oppose them have voted with their feet and left the state. Therefore, it may be assumed that those remaining and paying for these programs actually agree with them. For these folks, all they ask is that they not be cheated.

CONCLUSION

After reading this you will undoubtedly ask yourself, if he has devised such a full platform for Governor, why is he running for Lieutenant Governor and not Governor? The truth of the matter is that I feel that I could make a very good Governor for the State of Rhode Island, but I am now much more interested in elimination of a most egregious waste of tax money that is presently being spent on political welfare: the office of Lieutenant Governor.

A million dollars a year could do much for Rhode Island. It could come close to funding a half-time art or music teacher in every Rhode Island school district. It could give each community a new senior citizen bus. It could give every Rhode Islander a quick pick at the lottery. It could buy $25,000.00 of new books and supplies for every municipal library system. It could put a dollar in everyone's pocket in tax reform. It could do so much and it could do it every year.

Instead, we Rhode Islanders pay a million dollars a year to have a person talk about how we should spend our money. It is as absurd as hiring a person to come with you to the grocery store to tell you what items you should purchase when you already have made out the list.

The argument that the Lt. Governor serves as a watchdog is ridiculous at best. The argument that we need a "think tank" Lieutenant Governor is equally as ludicrous. We are a state in deficit. Why waste a million dollars a year? This is especially troubling when we have already departments full of policy wonks living in their own "think tanks". This overlapping of personnel is not assuaged by the fact that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor may occasionally be of the same party. If the Governor needs a helper, he can certainly hire one for less than a million dollars a year.

The Lieutenant Governor's office is a parking sport for political wannabes. The ruse of "think tank" or "help mate" are both defeated by the fact that such a person already exists or could be hired at a fraction of the cost.

Quite frankly, for anyone to run for this office on a platform other than elimination is disingenuous and shows utter contempt for the electorate by playing on their stupidity.

But I digress. This platform document is quite wide ranging and while being more definitive than most platforms, is not wholly complete in exact details. This, as I indicated earlier, is not from a lack of those specifics, but more from a realization that good policy cannot be created in a vacuum and set down precisely in a cogent platform document.

I have tried to cover most topics that would encompass governing Rhode Island and to give insight as to how I would govern should the need ever arise. I have addressed education, taxation, law, health care, economic development, emergency management, transportation, public welfare, along with a multitude of tangentially related areas of state governance.

If you, the people of Rhode Island, see fit to elect me, I promise that I will fully execute my Constitutional role as Lieutenant Governor without cost or compensation while attempting to effectuate a Constitutional change that would eliminate the office and set a new line of succession. I shall be the Lieutenant Governor in name only and will assume the office of Governor, if required to do so, otherwise, I will not be there for you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I propose this platform not as an academic exercise, but as a working plan. The basis for these ideas and concepts largely come from both my education and my practical experiences.

I am a trained educator. My undergraduate study prepared me to teach Secondary English. I went on to use that degree to teach at a private school in Oregon, substitute teach on a long term basis in Rhode Island, teach as a daily substitute in the then troubled Boston Public School system, and later teach in the English Department at Northeastern University.

As a person interested in Education, I took a Master's degree in Reading Education, and a second Master's in the field I taught, English Literature. My Ph.D work at Columbia University's Teachers College was concentrated on Philosophy of Education, primarily in international and comparative education with a focus on Japan and its embracing of John Dewey's education models in the post-war era.

In the meantime, I also served as the Chairperson of the Warren School Committee for four years, served as the Warren Town Council's appointment to the Bristol-Warren Regionalization Study Commission, and as the outside the district representative to the Chariho De-Regionalization Committee. During my tenure on the Warren School Committee, I served as its legislative liaison and as its representative to the Rhode Island Association of School Committees.

During these times, I became an attorney in a small-town practice servicing the needs of the working middle class with no-cost or low-cost legal services. I have, during the twenty years or so of practice, worked in most of the areas of legal concentration. My cases ranged from working to expose the infamous Strike Force to the challenging of Rhode Island election laws in federal court to the taxpayers suit to get a fair vote in district meetings and more. I currently serve as the Bristol County Bar Association Secretary, a position I have had for over a decade.

In the course of my life, I have also been involved in business. I have been trained in international trade in Tokyo, Japan, operated several businesses in South America, and engaged in business in Rhode Island. Having been reasonably successful in those economic endeavors, I have been afforded the luxury to engage in politics.

Growing up in a blue collar factory town, the only child of a journeyman plumber and a factory worker who gave 55 years to making handkerchiefs, I understand both the plight and the needs of the working classes. Having grandparents on one side with a long lineage in America and the others being Italian immigrants, I understand the issues that surround immigration and nationalization. Being able to travel the world, I know that there is no one right solution for all the problems and that not everyone sees the same picture.

In short, I have both the training and experience to talk about the issues in a reasoned, logical manner and to offer solutions that are reasoned and logical, not to mention, necessary.