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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOTER

★★★ **GUIDE** ★★★

2026

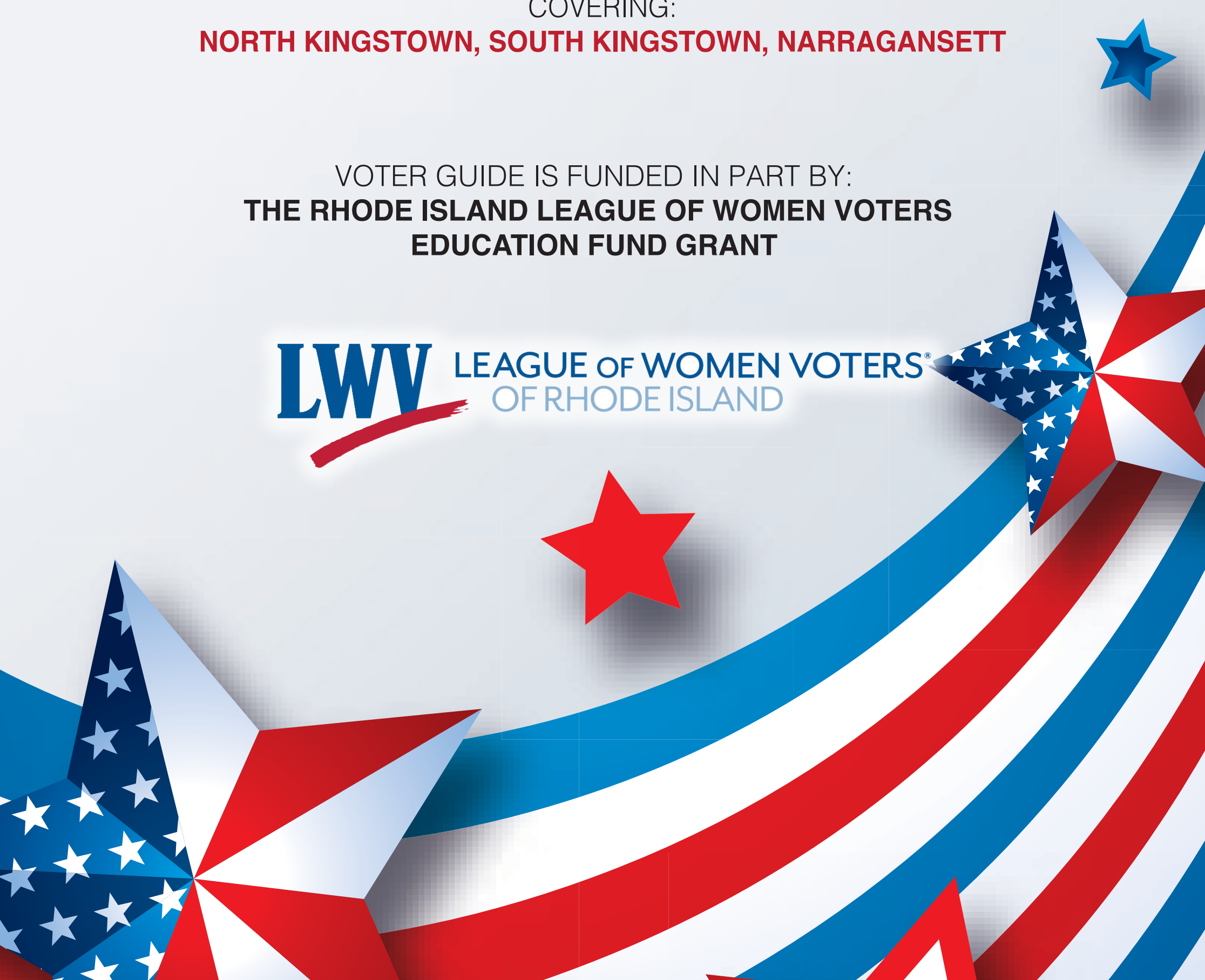
COVERING:

NORTH KINGSTOWN, SOUTH KINGSTOWN, NARRAGANSETT

VOTER GUIDE IS FUNDED IN PART BY:
**THE RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
EDUCATION FUND GRANT**

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF RHODE ISLAND



2026 LIST OF CANDIDATES

STATE SENATORS - Elect 1/District - 2 year terms

District 35 - North Kingstown, South Kingstown, East Greenwich
BRIDGET G. VALVERDE - D (Incumbent) - uncontested

District 37 - South Kingstown
VIRGINIA SUSAN SOSNOWSKI - D (Incumbent) - uncontested

District 36 - Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham
ALANA M. DIMARIO - D (Incumbent) - uncontested

District 38 - South Kingstown, Charlestown, Westerly
VICTORIA GU - D (Incumbent)
WESTIN J. PLACE - R

STATE REPRESENTATIVES - Elect 1/District - 2 year terms

District 31 - North Kingstown, Exeter
JAMES C. SHEEHAN - D - uncontested

District 34 - South Kingstown, Narragansett
TERESA A. TANZI - D (Incumbent) - uncontested - opted out

District 32 - North Kingstown
ROBERT E. CRAVEN, Jr. - D - uncontested

District 35 - South Kingstown
KATHLEEN A. FOGARTY - D (Incumbent)
JENNIFER P. NERBONNE - R

District 33 - South Kingstown, Narragansett
JESSICA DREW DAY - R
CAROL HAGAN MCENTEE - D (Incumbent)

District 36 - South Kingstown, Charlestown, Westerly, New Shoreham
TINA L. SPEARS - D (Incumbent) - uncontested - opted out

TOWN OFFICES

NARRAGANSETT (NON-PARTISAN)

Town Council - Two Year Term - Vote for up to 5

MARK A. BRADY
THOMAS Q. CALLAHAN
MICHAEL J. DELUCA
JAMES PATRICK DURKIN (Incumbent)
RUPERT FRIDAY
JILL A. LAWLER
ALEXANDER T. MENZIES (Incumbent)
JESSE PUGH
DONNA VIGNALI (Incumbent)
LILLY WEISZ-NESSHOEVER

School Committee - Two Year Term - Vote for up to 5

DENISE M. MANZI - no response
TAMMY JEAN MCNEIECE (Incumbent)
DIANE S. NOBLES (Incumbent)
DAVID S. PAVONE (Incumbent)
JUSTIN WOLF SKENYON (Incumbent)
CAROLYN J. TUDINO (Incumbent)

NORTH KINGSTOWN

Town Council - Two Year Term - Vote for up to 5

LINNEA M. DREW - D (Incumbent)
ELIZABETH HILL ROSS - I (Incumbent)
GREGORY A. MANCINI - D (Incumbent)
VANESSA MASCARO - I
KIMBERLY ANN PAGE - D (Incumbent)
JESSICA PLAVICKI - D
STACEY LYNN WEINSTEIN - D
RICHARD A. WELCH - I

School Committee - Four Year Term - Vote for up to 2

ERIN WEST EARLE - D (Incumbent)
PAMELA R. PINHEIRO - I
HOLLY QUINN - I - no response
AUBREY SCHABOWSKY - D

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

Town Council - Two Year Term - Vote for up to 5

PATRICIA A. ALLEY - D (Incumbent) - uncontested
DEBORAH D. BERGNER - D (Incumbent) - uncontested
MICHAEL K. MARRAN - D (Incumbent) - uncontested
RORY H. MCENTEE - D (Incumbent) - uncontested
JAY G. WEGIMONT - D (Incumbent) - uncontested

School Committee - Four Year Term - Vote for up to 3

JACK LAWRENCE CADMAN - D
JENNIFER KRUEGER - D
KATHERINE M. MACINANTI - I (Incumbent)
JAMES L. RESTIVO - D (Incumbent)
CAROL A. VETTER - D (Incumbent)



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SOUTH COUNTY

Dear Readers,

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. We never support or oppose a political party or candidate. Our goal has always been to educate voters so that they may make informed choices when they enter the voting booth. By providing a Voter's Guide to your community, we hope that you learn more about the local candidates who are seeking offices and understand their positions more clearly.

Be informed before you vote! Check the RI Secretary of State's Office website to learn more and become familiar with the ballot you will see when voting. Most importantly VOTE!

Thank you to all the citizens who anonymously submitted questions for consideration. Thank you to all the LWVSC volunteers who contributed to this guide. Special thanks to all the candidates who responded in a timely manner with your answers.

This Voter Guide is paid for, in part, by a grant from the Rhode Island League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501(c)3 entity, established by a generous donation from Susan B. Wilson, a past local LWVSC member.

Warmest regards,

Christine Martone

Christine Martone
President

Nina Rossemando

Nina Rossomando
Head, Voter Services

Nancy McLean

Nancy McLean
Project Lead

RI League of Women Voters, South County Chapter
www.lwvscri.org

Ballot Questions

Check your sample ballot for the details at <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/>

The League of Women Voters does not take a position on this or any ballot question, but provides the following information to help you vote your interests. Find more details about all state and town ballot questions in the 2026 Voter Information Guide from the RI Secretary of State Office that has been mailed to registered voters in Rhode Island.

1. Higher Education Facilities - \$275,000,000
2. Housing and Homeownership - \$120,000,000
3. Economic Development - \$100,000,000
4. Cultural Economy - \$50,000,000
5. Green Economy Bonds - \$55,000,000

Local Ballot Questions

Town Name: **Narragansett**

6. Fire Station Equipment, Expansion, Improvement, and Renovations - \$3,000,000

Town Name: **South Kingstown**

6. Police Department Rules and Regulations - Town Council Approval (Resolution of the Town Council adopted May 26, 2026)

Local Ballot Questions - vary by town

Check your sample ballot for the details at <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/>

EARLY

VOTING

HERE

20

20

20

EARLY VOTING PERIOD

OCTOBER 14 - NOVEMBER 2, 2026

In the 20 days leading up to Election Day, you can vote in person at your town hall. This is a great option if you are unable to vote at your usual polling place on Election Day, or if you have run out of time to request a mail ballot.

NARRAGANSETT TOWN HALL

25 FIFTH AVENUE, NARRAGANSETT

M-F, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS

*NOV 2 ENDS AT 4:00 PM

NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN HALL

100 FAIRWAY DRIVE, NORTH KINGSTOWN

MON AND TUE: 8 AM TO 5 PM

WED AND THUR: 8 AM TO 4:30 PM

FRIDAYS: 8 AM TO NOON

EXCEPT HOLIDAYS

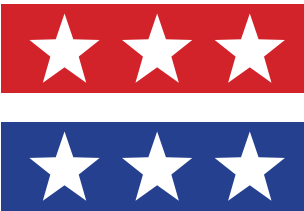
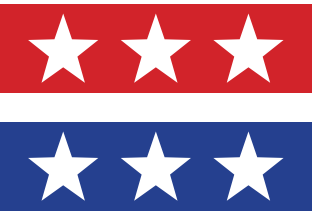
*ON NOV 2 ENDS AT 4:00 PM

SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN HALL

180 HIGH STREET, WAKEFIELD

M-F, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS

*NOV 2 ENDING AT 4:00 PM



State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates

SENATE



Senate District 35
Bridget G. Valverde
Democrat
Incumbent - uncontested

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

In the decade and a half since Rhode Island adopted the current School Funding Formula, we've seen significant changes in enrollment patterns, programs being offered to students, and increasing transportation, healthcare, and student support costs. It is time to update the way we fund education in Rhode Island to better support our

students and increase state aid predictability for our towns.

At the beginning of this year, the Rhode Island Foundation convened a Blue Ribbon Commission to evaluate the current funding formula and make recommendations for improvements. This fall, a joint legislative study commission of the RI General Assembly will review those recommendations and translate them into actionable legislation and budget appropriations.

The Blue Ribbon Commission made some great recommendations that recognize that educating our children is a whole-state responsibility and that funding obligations should be more equitable and fall more on the state and less on localities. For example, they suggest shifting some of the more volatile and costly line items like out-of-district transportation, retirement pensions and high-cost special education, from cities and towns to the state. They also recommended ways to increase transparency and accountability for improving academic outcomes and ensuring that municipalities are paying their local share based on ability to pay. I look forward to the discussion ahead this year and to working with my colleagues to improve the funding formula.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

Despite what some people suggest, the Second Amendment and common-sense gun safety laws are not at odds with each other. I have been clear about the need to address gun violence in all its forms since I first ran for

Senate in 2018. Gun injuries and deaths affect us all, whether you or a loved one has experienced it directly or you live with the daily fear that your workplace or children's school could become the next tragedy.

In my time in the General Assembly, I have proudly supported efforts to keep guns out of our schools, ban ghost guns, strengthen safe storage laws, and improve suicide prevention. Last year, we finally passed a prohibition on the sale and transfer of assault-style weapons. I advocated for a stronger law to ban not just the sale, but the possession of such weapons; unfortunately, gun advocates were successful in blocking its passage.

I will continue to proudly stand with advocacy groups like Moms Demand Action and the RI Coalition Against Gun Violence who work with students, survivors and experts to make us all safer through education as well as legislation.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Absent a single-payer universal healthcare system, which I favor, we must do what we can to bring down costs and improve access in other ways. The cost of health insurance has been on the rise and it has only been exacerbated by the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" championed and passed by Congressional Republicans last year. That bill cut the enhanced premium assistance on Affordable Care Act plans sold on our health insurance exchange,

resulting in thousands of Rhode Islanders unable to afford to stay insured. No health coverage means more emergency department visits when people get sick and the state will have to cover the cost of uncompensated care. That's why I supported appropriating \$22 million in premium assistance in this year's budget, so Rhode Islanders can regain and keep their coverage. I will continue to support this in future budgets until the federal funding is restored.

We also have a primary care provider shortage due to low reimbursement rates for primary care compared to our neighboring states. We cannot attract and retain enough PCPs if they can make a much higher salary in CT or MA. We must raise reimbursement rates to regain some competitiveness and rebuild our primary care workforce. I am also very supportive of establishing a medical school at URI. Training more health care providers right here in RI and giving them tuition reimbursement in return for staying here and practicing will help us with the shortage long-term.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

I'm glad that Secretary of State Gregg Amore immediately rejected the ill-conceived request from the Department of Justice to hand over our state's full non-public voter file. He was entirely correct that voter files are under the sole purview of states and the federal government has no need to possess the sensitive and personal information contained in those files.

I'm also pleased that a federal judge

agreed with him when the DOJ sued to get access to the file and their case was dismissed. Through that case, it became clear they had no legitimate reason for the request in the first place. As this administration continues to overreach their authority, the courts must continue to serve as a bulwark against their worst intentions.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

We have a shortage of available housing in Rhode Island, particularly for lower and middle income families. Seniors who would like to downsize and simplify in retirement are unable to find the type of housing they'd like to move into. Young families just starting out are finding it very hard to afford even a starter home in our state.

Decades of very low rates of development have caught up with us and we need to encourage more housing construction. The laws that the General Assembly enacted over the past several years to do just that have resulted in a lot of new housing starts, including deed-restricted affordable units that will remain affordable for decades to come. This is a good thing.

That doesn't mean that the laws can't be reevaluated to make sure we are not putting undue strain on local water systems or other resources. Local planning and zoning should be able to take into

account a professional evaluation of infrastructure capacity when deciding whether or not to permit development. We should also be providing municipalities with the financial support to improve local infrastructure where appropriate so it cannot be used as the sole means to reject new housing.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

It has been an honor and an incredible learning experience to represent North Kingstown, East Greenwich, and South Kingstown in the Rhode Island Senate these past eight years. I have had the privilege to really get to know the place my family and I call home and the people who make this area such a great place to live. I have successfully championed dozens of bills that address a range of issues like healthcare access and affordability, environmental protections, early childhood education and care, and funding for transit, education and the arts.

And I'm not done yet! In my next term I hope to continue my work to reduce plastic waste, speed our transition to renewable energy sources, and make Rhode Island more affordable for all.

Thank you to the League of Women Voters for their continued commitment to informing voters and making sure everyone's voices are heard in our democracy!

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



Senate District 36
Alana M. DiMario
Democrat
Incumbent - uncontested

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

One component that was largely unaddressed by the otherwise very thorough Rhode Island Foundation Blue Ribbon Study Commission Report is the issue of declining enrollment. This is a statewide problem, but it is certainly of particular concern to the school districts in Senate District 36. The Commission has the opportunity

to bring this very pertinent factor into the conversation, and consult with the superintendents and other educators that have been working on this topic to inform the ultimate funding formula decisions so they are realistic and sustainable.

Otherwise, my recommendation to the Education Funding Commission is to keep front and center the goal of ensuring that every Rhode Island student has the opportunity for a world-class education, regardless of where they live. Historically we have districts in Rhode Island where municipalities underfund their school systems, and I support our state funding formula eliminating these disparities. Our economic future depends on getting this right. We are both educating the future of Rhode Island's workforce and trying to attract new businesses to Rhode Island. Strong schools, statewide, is what will help us accomplish both of these things.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

As a mental health counselor I am well aware of the devastating consequences of a person in their worst moment of anger, overwhelm, or sadness having easy access to a gun. This is why I am committed to supporting gun safety policies that keep people and communities safe. I believe we have made good progress on this front with Red Flag laws, Safe Storage laws, and laws that seek to balance the types of firearms and accessories that are legal for individuals to own with community safety.

I know that historically some of these

laws have been challenged in court, and anti-gun safety advocates will point to those challenges as a reason to stop trying to advance any legislation related to the regulation of firearms. I disagree. As a legislator I think we do the best we can with the information we have, balancing out personal rights with community safety, and move ahead accordingly. As new evidence and new challenges emerge on this or any other front, it's our job to address them as best we can. If we have to come back at something to get the balance right, we will.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

I've worked on this issue for the past few years, and intend to keep at it until every Rhode Islander has access to the right physical and mental health care, in the right place, at the right time. In the near term we are conducting a reimbursement rate review that will inform our next steps in aligning our rates with peer states, helping to attract and retain new providers. We are also changing policies to ease administrative burdens on providers, such as prior authorization paperwork and prescription transfers.

We are pursuing scholarship and student loan reimbursement initiatives in exchange for a service commitment in Rhode Island. Additionally, we are building opportunities for training and residency sites, because providers tend to stay where they train. I am also inter-

ested in exploring creative incentives related to housing or other assistance.

I use the term "providers" because another aspect of solving this problem is ensuring that all of our health care providers are working at the top of their training to fill all the needed roles in our healthcare system. For example, we have made changes to the scope of practice for pharmacists and other allied health professionals who are trained and capable to expand the ways they are providing care, and this work will continue.

Finally, we have initiated opening a public medical school at the University of Rhode Island, which will bring faculty providers here starting now and create a pipeline of future providers, along with many other economic benefits.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

I'm strongly opposed, and very appreciative of Secretary of State Gregg Amore's steadfast defense of the privacy of Rhode Islanders' data. This attempt to create a national voter database is federal overreach and the danger of disenfranchisement of eligible voters is too high.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

primary care providers, strengthening mental health care, ensuring access to prescription drugs, and more. In primary care, among other steps, we have increased reimbursement rates to make them more competitive with other states, removed prior authorization requirements, increased training sites, and funded tuition and student loan assistance. Legislation I sponsored this year funded creation of the state's first public medical school, which will be a primary care-focused program at the University of Rhode Island, in my district. I have also sponsored a bill to strengthen South County Hospital, for which I will continue to work on. The challenges we face in health care are complex and multi-faceted, and I look forward to continuing our work to address these challenges.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

I have great confidence in Secretary of State Gregg Amore and his work to ensure the integrity of Rhode Island's voting system, and to push back against federal infringement into the constitutional authority of the states to administer elections. There is zero basis

to believe that Rhode Island's system is anything other than safe and secure.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

Rhode Island, like many states, is experiencing a severe housing crisis. The General Assembly has worked to address this crisis in many ways, including historic funding levels for subsidized housing, streamlining of permitting, and attempts to remove barriers that discourage housing production. In my review of bills that aim to remove barriers to construction, I always try to balance the need for local control of their own communities while also recognizing the magnitude of the challenge before us.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

Serving as the state senator from

District 37 is the honor of a lifetime. It is also a responsibility that I take very seriously. I strive to serve with honesty and integrity, to be responsive to my constituents, and to deliver results that make a difference in the lives of Rhode Islanders. Among the major challenges facing our state are affordability of housing, goods and services; accessibility of health care, particularly primary care; strengthening our mental health care system; stewardship of our environment and natural resources; investment in public pre-K-12 education, as well as URI; investing in our road and bridge infrastructure; supporting our hard working retirees, including retired public employees who deserve a COLA; and supporting our local agriculture and seafood industries and local small businesses. I have submitted legislation to address each of these challenges, and I hope to continue working to address these and other issues in the Senate on behalf of the people of South Kingstown.

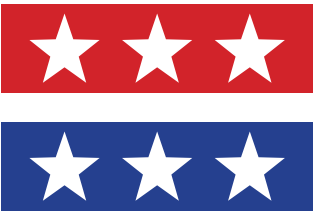
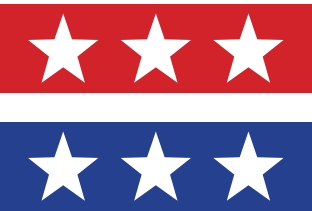
7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



YOUR  VOTE
Counts

VOTE EARLY
October 14, 2026 -
November 2, 2026



State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates

SENATE



Senate District 38
Victoria Gu
Democrat - Incumbent

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

At our South County Education Leaders Breakfast and Chariho School Committee meetings, two funding priorities stood out: special education and out-of-district transportation costs

Special Education: Have the state fully fund high-cost special education (historically it's been about 56% funded) so districts can sustain services without sacrificing other priorities.

Out-of-District Transportation Costs: Students with special circumstances (DCYF, homeless, special education) sometimes require long distance transportation to get to and from an out-of-district school, and currently it's

their home district that has to pay for that. The goal is to 1. Fund these costs at the state level 2. find cost-saving efficiencies within the statewide busing system

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

I support responsible gun ownership and believe there are meaningful ways to reduce gun deaths in Rhode Island. Rhode Island red flag laws and 7-day waiting periods help protect victims of domestic violence and impulsive violence.

I also support restrictions on the sale of new military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. These weapons can deliver a high volume of fire quickly and have been used in some of the deadliest mass shootings in our country. I believe we can respect the Second Amendment while recognizing that reasonable regulations can save lives.

We also need to crack down on gun trafficking, which puts illegal firearms into the hands of people who should not have them. Rhode Island requires background checks on all purchases , and we should continue enforcing the law against straw purchasing (having a middleman buy a gun for someone in order to evade a background check). Finally, we need to enforce the ban on untraceable ghost guns and hold gun dealers and traffickers accountable.

These policies should be part of a comprehensive approach to gun safety: keeping guns away from people who pose a demonstrated risk, preventing illegal trafficking, and reducing access to weapons designed for mass casualty events. We can uphold constitutional rights while taking practical steps to make Rhode Island communities safer.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to

affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Many residents, including me, have seen their primary care physician retire or experience burnout; there is a nationwide shortage. In 2026, the General Assembly dedicated more than \$40 million to increase primary care rates, including \$15 million in state funds matched by federal dollars. We should build on that investment by continuing to improve reimbursement across Medicaid, Medicare, and commercial insurance to stabilize our health care system and retain our workforce.

We also need to grow the primary care workforce at every stage of the pipeline. That means investing in a primary-care-focused medical school in RI, expanding primary care residency opportunities, implementing the physician licensure compact to make it easier for qualified physicians to practice here, and expanding loan forgiveness and scholarship programs. We should ensure that both rural and urban areas benefit from doctors recruited through these programs.

Finally, we need to make better use of the workforce we already have. I'm the lead sponsor on a bill, working with Charlestown Rescue, Westerly Ambulance, and others, to establish sustainable funding and reimbursement for community paramedicine, also known as Mobile Integrated Health. This model allows trained paramedics to provide preventive care, chronic-disease support, follow-up visits, and connections to health and social services in patients' homes. Expanding MIH can help residents get care earlier, reduce emergency room use, and keep people healthier at home.

Primary care is the foundation: if we invest in it now, we can improve access, affordability, and health outcomes for Rhode Islanders over the long term

4. What is your position with regard

to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

I oppose efforts by the federal government to demand sensitive Rhode Island voter information that it does not need to administer our elections. States have the responsibility to run their own elections, and Rhode Island has a duty to protect voters' personal information.

The federal government already has access to voter information that is publicly available. The Justice Department's request for Rhode Island voters' Social Security and driver's license numbers went much further. That information is protected under state and federal law, and the Secretary of State has a mandate to protect it.

Rhode Islanders should have confidence that our voter rolls are regularly maintained. In November 2025, the Secretary of State sent a voter-list maintenance mailing to registered voters statewide and removed voters from the rolls when appropriate, including when they had moved. Rhode Island also participates in information-sharing programs with other states designed to keep voter rolls accurate and identify potential election fraud. The state's Elections Division has found ERIC to be a useful tool for both purposes.

Most importantly, Rhode Island voters should not have to choose between secure elections and privacy. We can maintain accurate voter rolls, identify potential problems, and protect the integrity of our elections without handing over sensitive personal information. I will continue to support Rhode Island's authority to administer its own elections and protect the privacy of its voters.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the

impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

Rhode Island's housing crisis is urgent. Young people are struggling to put down roots. Families & seniors are wondering whether they can afford to remain in the communities they call home.

That is why I have taken the lead in making it easier for homeowners to have accessory dwelling units (ADUs). ADUs are a practical way to add small, long-term rental homes on existing lots (reducing pressure to develop open spaces or forests). A backyard suite can be designed to accommodate the aging homeowner who can no longer walk up stairs, allowing them to remain in their community.

On other housing bills, I've taken a balanced approach: I supported some bills that cut red tape but opposed others. My philosophy is towns should continue to create affordable housing plans and designate where they want new housing to go in their comprehensive plan. If an area is designated open space, leave it as open space. If a housing proposal meets the zoning requirements already and matches the density of the surrounding neighborhood, then we should reduce red tape.

The housing review process has environmental safeguards in state law. For example, RI DEM regulates septic systems based on the number of bedrooms; if adding bedrooms, you're required to switch to a denitrification system. These protections help limit environmental impacts in communities that rely on septic systems and wells.

We should respect local infrastructure constraints while recognizing that thoughtful, incremental housing growth is part of the solution to Rhode Island's housing crisis.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your

top priority during your term?

What differentiates me as a candidate is my combination of technical expertise, practical problem-solving, and a focus on South County. If re-elected, my top priority will be expanding access to primary care. I also bring a technical background in software engineering to my work as Chair of the RI Senate Committee on AI and Emerging Technologies. AI will have a profound impact on our economy, education, and daily lives, and we need to make sure Rhode Island is prepared.

My approach to policymaking is grounded in evidence: as a software engineer & data analyst, I was trained to identify a problem, test a solution, and use data to determine whether it worked. I am applying that approach in a new task force I created to design a Food as Medicine pilot program aimed at improving health outcomes while reducing Medicaid costs through evidence-based nutrition interventions.

I also bring a strong commitment to our coastal communities. As a former chair of the Climate Resiliency Commission, I helped Charlestown enroll in the state's Municipal Resiliency Program and brought residents together to prioritize solutions. I have also passed legislation to make new buildings more energy-efficient, championed the Act on Coasts to strengthen our preparedness and protect critical infrastructure, and strengthened shoreline access laws.

Finally, I have been leading the charge to reform RI Energy so that they don't profiteer at the expense of residents. I will always take the side of working families against lobbyists that represent corporate interests.

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



Senate District 38
WESTIN J. PLACE
Republican

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

I believe Rhode Island needs to get back to the basics of what made our education system successful: reading, writing, mathematics, science, civics, and preparing students for the future. The current formula is not producing the results Rhode Islanders deserve, and simply increasing funding is not reform.

We should reward achievement and give students multiple paths to success. Not every student needs a four-year college degree. Trade schools, vocational programs, apprenticeships, and career and technical education should be treated as valuable alternatives, not second choices.

I also support school choice. A child's ZIP code should not determine

whether they have access to a quality education. Parents should have meaningful options when their assigned public school is failing their child.

Funding should be based on the actual needs of students and communities, but it must also come with accountability. Chronic absenteeism should not be ignored, and schools should have the tools to address chronically disruptive or dangerous behavior without allowing it to continually interfere with the education of everyone else. Parents must also accept responsibility for their children's behavior.

We should encourage students to attend school, work hard, achieve, and take pride in their accomplishments. Our goal should not simply be to spend more on education. It should be to produce better educational outcomes while giving parents and students more choices and respecting local taxpayers.

2. What are your views on the 2nd Amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

I strongly support the Second Amendment and the constitutional right of law-abiding Rhode Islanders to keep and bear arms. I believe responsible firearm ownership is important, and I support firearm safety education so that gun owners understand safe handling, storage, and use.

I also support safe storage, but I do not support laws that mandate how a responsible firearm owner must store their firearm in their own home. The Constitution protects our right to keep and bear arms; it does not give the government the right to require us to lock those arms away indefinitely or make them inaccessible when we may lawfully need them.

Rhode Island has enacted an increasing number of restrictions on responsible firearm owners. I will not support legislation that violates the Constitution or unnecessarily infringes upon the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Instead of continually creating new restrictions, we should focus on the

people actually committing firearm crimes. I support stronger penalties for flagrant unlawful firearm offenses, particularly for repeat offenders, and making sure existing laws are properly enforced.

I believe we can promote firearm safety and protect our communities without treating responsible gun owners like criminals. As a Senator, I will defend the constitutional rights of Rhode Islanders while supporting education, responsible ownership, and serious consequences for those who unlawfully use firearms.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

As someone who works in healthcare, I see firsthand how difficult it has become for patients to find affordable care and for independent medical practices to provide it. We need to address both the cost to patients and the cost of delivering care.

We need to strengthen primary care, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, and make it easier for independent practices to operate. Excessive insurance bureaucracy and regulations increase costs and make it harder for providers to remain independent.

I also believe we need to be realistic about how we address the provider shortage. Spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on a new medical school at URI may have long-term benefits, but it will not meaningfully solve today's shortage. It could be 15 years before we see meaningful numbers of graduates entering the workforce. Rhode Island cannot wait that long.

We need to make Rhode Island a place where healthcare professionals want to live and work. That means addressing housing costs, taxes, education costs, and the overall cost of living while creating an environment where medical professionals can establish

practices and build their careers.

We should also increase competition and price transparency so patients have more choices and can make informed decisions about their care.

My goal is to make Rhode Island more affordable for patients and providers. If we want more doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals here, we need to make it worth their while to move here, stay here, and practice here.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

I believe Rhode Island's voter ID laws are working, and I support maintaining them. However, I do believe there are areas where we can improve election integrity and public confidence.

One concern is that Rhode Island-issued driver's licenses and identification issued to individuals who are not eligible to vote can look the same. There should be an obvious distinction between identification used by eligible voters and identification issued for other purposes so there is no confusion about who is eligible to participate in elections.

I also believe Rhode Island could benefit from additional oversight and regular verification of its voter rolls. While door knocking during a campaign, I have personally encountered addresses where multiple people were listed as voters, only to learn that the address was actually a group home where none of those individuals were registered residents. That does not automatically mean fraud occurred, but it demonstrates why voter rolls need to be regularly reviewed and kept current.

I support reasonable oversight and verification to ensure our voter rolls are accurate. However, that does not mean the federal government should have unrestricted access to Rhode Island's sensitive voter information. Election administration is primarily a responsibility of the states, and any federal

request for voter information should have a clear legal basis and appropriate privacy protections.

We can protect election integrity, improve the accuracy of our voter rolls, and preserve Rhode Island's authority over its own elections at the same time.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

I do not believe Providence should be dictating how every Rhode Island community develops. Our towns are different, and the people who live in those towns understand their land, infrastructure, neighborhoods, and limitations far better than legislators sitting in Providence.

The state's 10% affordable-housing requirement is a good example of a policy that ignores local realities. Many communities simply do not have the available land, sewer capacity, or water resources to accommodate the level of development these mandates envision. We cannot create land that does not exist, expand a sewer system beyond its capacity overnight, or demand unlimited development from communities dependent on wells with finite water resources.

Housing is important, and I support responsible development, but the state should not use the housing shortage as an excuse to eliminate local zoning authority. Town councils and residents should have the ability to determine what development makes sense for their communities.

If Providence believes its approach to development is best, Providence should have the freedom to implement it within Providence. The same principle should apply to every other Rhode Island community.

Let Providence make the decisions it believes are right for Providence, and let our towns retain the authority to keep our towns ours.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

What differentiates me is that I am not a career politician. I have spent my life working, running a small business, managing a healthcare practice, and raising a family. I understand what it means to make payroll, pay insurance, deal with regulations, and sit at the kitchen table trying to figure out how to make everything work when the cost of nearly everything keeps going up.

I am also running to represent the people of District 38, not a political party or the interests of Providence. I believe government should work for the people who live here, and decisions affecting our communities should be made as close to those communities as possible.

If elected, my top priority will be making Rhode Island more affordable for working families. That means addressing energy costs, taxes, housing costs, healthcare, and the regulations that make it increasingly expensive to live, work, and operate a small business here.

I will also fight to protect local control and the constitutional rights of Rhode Islanders. I don't believe every problem requires another government program, another tax, or another law.

My goal is simple: make Rhode Island a place where working families can afford to stay, businesses can afford to operate, and our children can afford to build their future here. I will bring common sense, accountability, and an independent voice to the Senate.

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes

But only if you cast it.

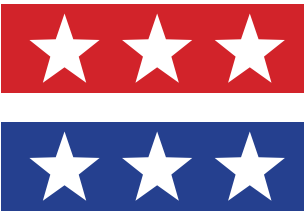
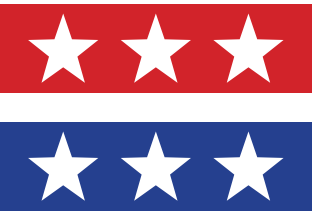
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of South County, Rhode Island



State of Rhode Island General Election Candidates

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



House District 31

James C. Sheehan
Democrat - uncontested

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

Rhode Island's education funding formula needs a comprehensive review and modernization. As a longtime member of the Senate Education Committee and a public school educator for more than 30 years, I have seen firsthand how funding decisions affect students, teachers, taxpayers, and communities.

I would ask the Commission to focus on whether the formula accurately re-

flects the real cost of educating students today, including special education, multilingual learners, student mental health, transportation, and the growing cost of providing competitive salaries and benefits needed to attract and retain quality educators. We must also consider a community's ability to pay and avoid shifting an unreasonable burden onto local property taxpayers.

During my Senate service, I consistently supported increased state education aid, school construction, Universal Kindergarten, and Rhode Island Promise. I believe every child deserves access to a quality public education regardless of ZIP code. Any revised formula should be fair, transparent, predictable, adequately funded, and recognize the very different needs and capacities of Rhode Island's communities.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

I strongly support the Constitution, including the Second Amendment and the individual right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms. At the same time, I believe that constitutional rights can coexist with reasonable, constitutionally sound measures designed to keep firearms away from people who pose a serious danger to themselves or others.

As a senator, I supported Rhode Island's Red Flag law, which allows a court to temporarily restrict firearm possession when a judge finds that an individual poses a significant danger, with due-process protections and a prompt hearing. I also supported the bump-stock ban, protections involving domestic violence, and an assault-style

weapons ban.

Going forward, I would evaluate gun legislation carefully for effectiveness, constitutionality, enforceability, and respect for due process. I do not believe responsible, law-abiding gun owners should be treated as criminals. Our challenge is to protect both individual liberty and public safety, and I believe we can do both.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Rhode Islanders increasingly struggle not only with the cost of healthcare but simply finding a provider, particularly a primary care physician. My immediate priority would be increasing access to primary care by improving reimbursement, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, and creating stronger incentives to recruit and retain physicians and other healthcare professionals in Rhode Island.

We also need to address affordability. In the Senate, I supported protections for essential health benefits, expanded contraceptive and mastectomy coverage, prescription-drug affordability initiatives, protections against mandatory overtime for nurses, and efforts to address the opioid crisis. I also worked to make lower-cost prescription drugs available to Rhode Islanders.

Longer term, Rhode Island needs to strengthen its healthcare workforce pipeline through our colleges and universities and address the underlying factors driving providers out of primary care. I will support practical solutions that increase competition, control pre-

scription-drug and insurance costs, and ensure that healthcare dollars are spent on patient care rather than unnecessary bureaucracy.

Access to health insurance matters, but having an insurance card means little if you cannot find a doctor when you need one.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

Rhode Island should protect the security and privacy of its voter information while complying with valid federal law and legitimate court orders. I would oppose turning over protected voter information merely because the federal government requests it without demonstrating lawful authority and an appropriate purpose.

Election integrity has long been important to me. In the Senate, I authored Rhode Island's post-election audit legislation to help safeguard and authenticate election results, and I supported secure online voter registration.

Our elections must be both accessible and secure. Rhode Islanders should be confident that eligible citizens can vote, that every lawful vote is counted accurately, and that personal voter information is protected from inappropriate disclosure or misuse.

Any federal request for Rhode Island voter information should therefore be evaluated under the Constitution and applicable federal and state law—not partisan politics. Where disclosure is legally required, Rhode Island should comply. Where it is not, the state should protect its voters' information.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly

preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

Rhode Island desperately needs more attainable housing, particularly starter homes and opportunities for first-time homebuyers. But solving the housing shortage should not mean ignoring local infrastructure, environmental limitations, neighborhood character, or responsible community planning.

State housing policy should establish meaningful statewide goals while giving municipalities reasonable flexibility in determining how those goals can best be achieved locally. Additional density brings real demands for drinking water, wastewater treatment, roads, schools, public safety, drainage, and other infrastructure. Those costs and limitations must be part of the equation.

I support responsible development that respects community character and provides meaningful local participation. I would also work to better coordinate state housing policy with investments in infrastructure so communities are not required to accommodate growth without the resources necessary to support it.

We need more housing, but we should build it intelligently. The goal should be to expand housing opportunities while protecting taxpayers, neighborhoods, natural resources, and the quality of life that makes our communities desirable places to live.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your

top priority during your term?

What differentiates me is experience combined with a demonstrated willingness to take on difficult issues. I served 20 years in the Rhode Island Senate and more than 30 years as a public school educator. During my Senate career, I led successful efforts to defeat the proposed Quonset mega-container port, restore Ethics Commission jurisdiction over the General Assembly, strengthen government transparency, protect private-property rights, and advance economic, environmental, education, and healthcare initiatives.

My immediate priority will be stopping the proposed sewage sludge processing facility at Quonset and reforming the Quonset Development Corporation to strengthen transparency, accountability, and North Kingstown's voice in decisions affecting our community.

I began fighting the sludge proposal before deciding to become a candidate. I distributed informational materials door-to-door, organized public awareness efforts, created StopTheSludge.net, produced yard signs, worked with residents and public officials, and testified at the State House.

With critical decisions likely during the next legislative session, experience matters. I know the legislative process, understand how to build coalitions, and have longstanding working relationships at the State House. If elected, I will be prepared to get to work on Day One.

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



House District 32

Robert E. Craven, Jr.
Democrat - uncontested

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

The current funding formula has served some districts well but it has real

faults: state aid is difficult for districts to predict, the formula inadequately reflects the cost of educating high need students, and it does not fully account for fixed costs that remain when students leave for charter schools. The Blue-Ribbon Commission built a legislative framework that more adequately captures the cost of educating a student, including the added cost to serve multilingual learners, disabled children and CTE students. It also recognizes that school housing aid, transportation and pension costs are all essential components of school funding. I have confidence a legislative change consistent with this approach would provide needed clarity and predictability to the system, create a more holistic and flexible approach to state funding for schools, and improve educational outcomes across the state.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

I recognize the individual right to keep and bear arms guaranteed by the Second Amendment, but support common-sense gun regulation of the kind Rhode Island has recently enacted. Gun violence is an urgent and preventable public health crisis. To stem the rising tide of gun violence, the legislature has banned ghost guns and high capacity magazines, restricted the purchase

and sale of assault-style weapons, and expanded background check requirements. These are all meaningful protections that keep firearms out of dangerous hands and limit their use in violent crime. I support continued gun safety measures, but the state must be thoughtful and craft legislation that will withstand constitutional scrutiny.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Provider shortages — particularly in primary care — drive ongoing access challenges in our state. As Rhode Island continues to lose physicians and other healthcare providers, the state must realign Medicaid reimbursement rates with those of neighboring states to remain competitive, attract providers, and retain the healthcare workforce. The state must also address healthcare gaps created by federal inaction. As the federal government shifts the cost of federal safety-net programs onto states without providing additional resources, the legislature must establish fiscal safeguards to protect access to care and ensure continued healthcare coverage for Rhode Islanders.

4. What is your position with regard

to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

This administration has undertaken increasingly brazen attempts to wrest power over elections from the states. Yet, this effort contravenes our founding principles as enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution vests primary power for administering elections with the states. This was borne out of the founders' concern that federal partisans "might contrive the manner of holding elections, so as to exclude all but their own favourites from office," to quote Justice Joseph Story. Further, the Tenth Amendment declares federal directives requiring state action "fundamentally incompatible" with our federalist system. A federal court has already rejected the DOJ's demand for Rhode Island's records, finding no legal basis for the request, and as a legislator, I would do all in my power to stand firmly against further federal overreach and work to protect Rhode Island's constitutional authority to administer its own elections.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies

with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

There is a housing shortage across low- and middle-income levels in Rhode Island, and North Kingstown is no exception. The General Assembly's zoning reforms streamline permitting and require municipalities to accommodate additional density. I understand the growing pains and concerns that come with new development. But the response cannot be to simply block housing production, since that is the surest way to reduce long-term housing costs. Rather, we must pair responsible growth with the infrastructure needed to support it. That means preserving community character through thoughtful design standards — not blanket resistance — and investing in the transportation infrastructure that allows density to work: more consistentRIPTA bus routes, bicycle lanes and sidewalks in downtown districts, and expanded rail service at Wickford Junction, which currently serves just a fraction of the ridership it was designed to accommodate. Growth and infrastructure investment must move together.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

For the past four years, I have served as the Director of Policy and Inter-

governmental Affairs for the Rhode Island General Treasurer. In that role, I have worked alongside state leaders at the highest levels of government to shape laws that make Rhode Island a place people want to stay in retirement or return after college, a place that is more equitable, and a place where homeownership is not just a dream but a real possibility. Few legislators have prior experience in state government, and that background has given me a detailed understanding of how policy moves from concept to enacted law, including the drafting, advocacy, and implementation required to see it through.

If elected, my top priority will be affordability. Rhode Island continues to lose residents — including young families and seniors — to rising in-state costs. Many of my peers from North Kingstown have left the state in search of opportunity, and for those who stay, the promise of homeownership is increasingly out of reach. Rhode Islanders graduating today face incomes that have not kept pace with the cost of living, student loans that follow them into middle age, and little ability to save for retirement.

1. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



House District 33

Jessica Drew Day
Republican

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

Rhode Island needs an overhaul of our education system. Test scores continue to show that significant change is needed. Too many children are struggling to meet basic reading and math standards.

I can't stand see the Governor and other Democrats equate spending more money with better education. They crow, "I increased the budget by X," but they rarely say, "and this resulted in higher English and math scores." It is time for a complete analysis of education spending and whether it improves outcomes.

I would direct more funding to struggling students through tutors and individualized instruction. One-on-one support can make a difference.

Everyone likes a new school building, but a new building does not automatically translate into a better education. Children learn in different

ways. Many thrive through hands-on learning; vocational and technical programs can prepare students for careers without requiring every child to follow the same path.

We also need to reexamine Rhode Island's local share of education funding. It is unfair that communities can receive less state funding because of higher property values. An increase in your home's value does not mean you have more money in your bank account. Many longtime residents should not be taxed out of homes they have worked their entire lives to afford.

My priorities are clear: invest in students, fund tutors, expand vocational programs, reward schools that demonstrate real results, and create a fairer system for taxpayers. We need to focus on outcomes—not simply how much money we spend.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

I strongly support the Second Amendment and the constitutional right of law-abiding Rhode Islanders to protect themselves and their families. Our laws must focus on violent criminals—not on creating new restrictions that place the burden on citizens who follow the rules.

Unfortunately, under House Judiciary Committee Chair Carol Hagan McEntee, the state has pushed to restrict these fundamental rights. In 2026, legislation like bill H8073 proposed removing protections for firearms that citizens already legally possessed. This means a person who followed every law could suddenly be forced to surrender their property.

That is where I draw the line. A citizen should not become a criminal overnight simply because politicians change the technical rules. My opponent supports laws that turn otherwise honest neighbors into felons over minor technicalities, such as possessing a standard, factory-made 15-round magazine instead of a 10-round one. These microscopic regulations do nothing to address the root causes of violent crime or make our communities any safer. As a constitutionalist, I believe the

right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. Public safety means punishing violent criminals who use firearms to commit crimes, not criminalizing citizens who obey the law. As your representative, I will always defend the Second Amendment, protect your property, and work to correct laws that unfairly target responsible gun owners.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Rhode Island has a serious problem with competition in the commercial health insurance market. BCBSRI has become so dominant that there are too few meaningful alternatives, while the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC), whose commissioner is appointed by the Governor, oversees reimbursement rates and approves premium increases. In some cases, BCBSRI has received approval for double-digit annual increases, approaching 20%. With limited alternatives, those costs ultimately fall on businesses, employers, and consumers. This lack of competition also reduces pressure to improve efficiency, quality, and customer service. BCBSRI is a nonprofit and publicly reports its financial information. In 2025, approximately 11% of its premium revenue went toward administrative and overhead expenses, compared with roughly 8% among BCBS companies nationally. With approximately \$2.4 billion in premium revenue, that 3-percentage-point difference represents roughly \$72 million annually. I am not suggesting that 8% is acceptable; it is simply a national comparison that highlights the disparity. We cannot know exactly how that \$72 million is spent. However, too much of our healthcare system is consumed by administrative burdens, prior-authorization requirements, claim denials, payment disputes, and paperwork, often leaving sick patients and providers caught in the middle with little recourse. We should reduce unnecessary administrative overhead, fix harmful practices involving prior

authorization, denials, and payments, and create a genuinely competitive commercial insurance marketplace. Consumers and businesses deserve more choices, greater transparency, lower costs, and better service. We need policies that encourage competition, accountability, efficiency, and meaningful choices for everyone purchasing health insurance.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

First and foremost, any candidate, political organization, or individual in Rhode Island can request voter registration information and voter history from the state.

That is why I am somewhat baffled by the controversy surrounding the federal government's request for access to Rhode Island's voter rolls. I think it is reasonable for the federal government to want to verify that the people listed on our voter rolls are real people, properly registered, and legally eligible to vote in Rhode Island.

Without the ability to verify that information, it can be difficult to determine whether everyone on the voter rolls is actually an eligible voter. We should not simply assume that every name on a voter list represents a legitimate, eligible voter without allowing the appropriate authorities to verify the information.

This concern is even more important given the recent disclosure from the White House that declassified intelligence showed voter registration rolls from at least 18 states, including Rhode Island, had been compromised by China.

If a foreign adversary has already obtained voter registration information, I believe we should be even more committed to making sure our voter rolls are accurate, secure, and contain only eligible voters.

I absolutely believe we should protect Rhode Islanders' sensitive personal information. But protecting people's privacy and verifying the integrity of our voter rolls are not mutually exclusive. There should be a way for the federal government to obtain the infor-

mation necessary to conduct legitimate verification while protecting sensitive personal data.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

The state should not have a say in the zoning decisions of our towns and cities. My opponent voted for and sponsored these bills. Our local zoning and planning committees understand what is needed to accommodate additional housing and commercial development while protecting the character of our communities. Local control matters.

Our water and sewer infrastructure has been failing for more than 20 years. We need serious investment in our infrastructure, and I will work as your representative to bring much-needed funding to our towns to address these problems.

Everyone knows that our sewer system at Scarborough Beach is in need of major repairs. It is polluting and cannot handle additional residents in its current condition. We have also faced water bans year after year. These are serious issues that directly affect the people who live here.

Unfortunately, our representatives have spent too much time focusing on issues outside of Narragansett and South Kingstown while critical infrastructure problems remain unresolved in our own communities.

As your representative, I will make fixing our water and sewer infrastructure a top priority. I will fight to bring the funding and resources we need to address these long-standing problems. We need representatives who will listen to local residents, respect local control, and focus on the issues that matter most to the people of Narragansett and South Kingstown.

Our towns deserve a stronger voice, better infrastructure, and responsible local decision-making.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

What differentiates me as a candidate is that I am not a career politician. I am a small-business owner who has spent more than 30 years working, paying taxes, meeting a payroll, and dealing with the same rising costs and regulations that families and businesses across Rhode Island face every day.

I am running because I believe our government has become too disconnected from the people it represents. We need representatives who will listen to their communities, stand up for taxpayers, protect our constitutional rights, and demand accountability for how our money is spent.

If elected, my top priority will be making Rhode Island more affordable and protecting the quality of life in Narragansett and South Kingstown. That means addressing our aging water and sewer infrastructure, fighting unnecessary taxes and regulations, supporting small businesses, expanding vocational and technical education, and making sure state policies do not override responsible local decision-making.

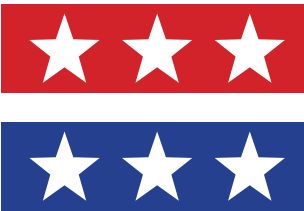
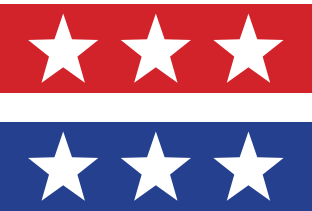
I will not support spending simply because more money is requested. I want to see measurable results and accountability. Whether it is education, healthcare, infrastructure, or economic development, taxpayers deserve to know that their money is being used effectively.

Most importantly, I will put my district first. I will listen to residents, work across the aisle when it benefits our communities, and bring our towns' concerns to the State House.

I am running to be a voice for the people of Narragansett and South Kingstown—not for the State House, not for a political party, and not for special interests.

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

No response



House District 33
Carol Hagan McEntee
Democrat - Incumbent

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

Rhode Island's educational needs have changed so much since the education funding formula was instituted 15 years ago and reform is sorely needed. I strongly supported the creation of this commission because our children

deserve a quality education and our municipalities need the financial capabilities to provide that quality education. We need a method that will balance the educational needs of our students and our communities financial abilities. The cost of education needs to be borne jointly by the state and the municipalities in an equitable manner. The current formula does not include critical expenses like student transportation, building maintenance and early childhood screening. These costs have been totally paid for by the municipalities. This places an unbalanced fiscal burden on our local school districts. I have confidence that the commission will carefully examine the numerous factors that need to be addressed such as population change, inflation, special education costs, municipal finances and pension obligations, rising operational costs and numerous other factors that need to be taken into account in order to provide our students with the best education possible.

2. What are your views on the 2nd Amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

While I support the 2nd Amendment and its intent, I believe there should be a limit on what type of extremely destructive firearms that can be owned by civilians. I do not believe that weapons that were designed for use by the police and the military in times of war should be available to every person. It is a sad reality that mass

shootings in our schools and communities throughout this country have become commonplace. We have seen it most recently in RI, with the Brown University shootings and the Pawtucket Hockey Rink shootings. As a mother of three children and a new grandmother, I want to reduce the risks of gun violence in our communities and protect our children and families. I have been a proud supporter of these common sense gun laws that we recently passed, like the safe storage act, the ban on high-capacity magazines and the ban on new sales of military style assault weapons.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable healthcare services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

The House took many steps to ensure access to quality and affordable healthcare this year such as increasing Medicaid rates, increasing support to hospitals, helping Rhode Islanders who were negatively impacted by federal changes to Medicaid policy. I co-sponsored legislation to begin the process of opening a medical school at the University of Rhode Island to address the state's primary care shortage. The state is suffering from a shortage of doctors caused by low reimbursement rates and increasing job demands. I believe that the planned model for a local, public medical school at URI with in-state residencies and scholarships for graduates who commit to providing primary

care in RI will help improve our access to affordable healthcare both near and long term.

I remain committed to keeping Rhode Islanders healthy with accessible healthcare as we build upon the ground work that was laid during previous legislative sessions. Some areas that we need to continue to examine are insurance affordability, retaining and supporting more of our state's doctors, increasing reimbursement rates and the rising costs for routine medical practices and procedures.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

The overreach and inappropriate demands we see coming from Washington D.C. are alarming and unacceptable. I believe Secretary of State Gregg Amore has done a tremendous job standing up to the Trump administration's intimidation and bullying tactics and I will continue to support his efforts to safeguard the information and privacy of Rhode Island voters and fight against harmful election deniers.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

Rhode Island is in the midst of a housing and affordability crisis with a shortage of homes, soaring rents and rising homelessness. There is no single city or town in the state where a median-income renter or first-time homebuyer can affordably live. The real problem is, without additional housing being built, specifically middle-income and affordable housing, our district risks becoming a community of nothing but summer homes and student housing. Without teachers, medical workers, municipal workers, hospitality employees, young families and professionals, our town risks shutting out those who keep everything running, because right now, these groups cannot afford to move to or live in our community due to astronomical housing prices caused by a significant lack of appropriate housing inventory and investment. We need more housing, to keep our families in RI, for our children and grandchildren. No new housing developments would be approved in Narragansett and South Kingstown that threaten the wellbeing or proper operation of our infrastructure such as sewer capacity and water supply.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

I have a proven track record of getting results for my constituents. I am an attorney and currently serve as Chair of the House Judiciary Committee. I sponsored landmark legislation that allows victims of childhood sexual abuse to

sue the pedophiles and the institutions that have enabled them. As Chair I helped pass legislation to keep ICE agents 200 feet from our polling places and restricted ICE agents from entering our courthouses without an ID and a warrant. As Chair of the House Small Business Committee, when COVID was decimating our state's restaurants, I introduced and passed legislation to "Take it Outside", which became very popular. When Matunuck Oyster Bar burned down, I added a catastrophe clause for all businesses which allowed them to operate at a temporary location and kept employees working. I've delivered results on gun control, women's reproductive rights, voting rights, justice for victims, parentage rights, and protecting and preserving our natural resources, homestead exemptions, funding for new SK High School.

If reelected, I will continue my efforts to protect our environment, promote and affordable economy, a high quality education, tax breaks for the elderly, accessible healthcare and public safety. I will continue to serve as a steadfast defense against the disastrous and harmful policies we see coming from our nation's capital. With countless rights being trampled upon and disregarded, the House Judiciary Committee stands as a crucial line of defense for all Rhode Islanders.

7. Yes or no – Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



House District 35
Kathleen A. Fogarty
Democrat - Incumbent

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

I stated on the house floor that South Kingstown was the biggest loser in the last school funding formula. I was on the Town Council when the last education commissioner used what I considered an unfair formula developed by a Brown University professor that used a quadratic equation favoring urban school districts for funding. South-Kingstown and regional schools were hurt for over a decade with State cuts based on the formula. I asked that the new commission review the outcomes from the last process. I will attend the commission hearings and testify about my concerns.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

We have an obligation as general assembly members to protect our citizens in the state of Rhode Island. I have voted to support commonsense gun legislation over the past decade. The general assembly passed a ban a military assault weapons, red flag laws, straw-purchases, banned high capacity magazines, safe gun storage legislation, and eliminating bump stocks.

I do not support banning guns into totality. I support hunters. I support a person's right to protect their property and their families. Currently, I'm work-

ing on legislation with the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association to close loopholes in Rhode Island concealed carry laws. This is also supported by the majority of Rhode Islanders.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

Rhode Islanders prime concern in the past few years has been access to healthcare. The house and the Senate have been working on a package of bills to address primary care concerns. There has been a \$115M increase to Medicare rates to increase physicians pay.

I sponsored legislation to provide loan-forgiveness incentives to encourage primary care doctors, physicians assistants and other healthcare professionals to stay and work in RI. Funding was for those who worked for more than two years in areas where there is a health care need in the state. The general assembly approved many interstate compacts in Rhode Island.

These compacts along with improved telehealth care brings needed access to healthcare for Rhode Islanders.

I sponsored legislation to begin a new family medicine residency program at Thundermist Health Centers. The program uses a combination of federal and state financing. The first class of residents starts in 2027. The American Association of medical colleges states that the majority of physicians practice in the state where they completed their residency training.

I also introduced a bill approved by the General Assembly addressing the primary-care doctor shortage for the future. A public medical school at URI to train more primary care doctors has been approved. The goal here is to keep our local students who want to attend medical school here in RI.

4. What is your position with regard to the federal government trying to gain access to our voter rolls?

The federal government should not have access to the state voter rolls. I believe it is an overreach by the Federal government. I support Secretary of State Gregg Amore's challenge which was upheld in court. The United States Constitution gives states the primary authority to administer elections.

5. The General Assembly has enacted a series of laws that increasingly preempt local zoning authority and require municipalities to accommodate additional residential density and development. How do you reconcile the impact and demand of these policies with the local infrastructure capacities in RI towns?

There is no denying that the state is in a housing crisis.

The general assembly tried to make changes to improve affordability and access. Over the past 20 years cities and towns were asked to meet a 10% affordable goal with their housing stock. Unfortunately only eight municipalities met this goal.

After COVID the problem only seemed to be exacerbated. We all know young adults who can't afford to buy a house in the town they grew up in. Families are being squeezed out of housing. The amount of homelessness has increased.

The housing problem is even more complicated when you look at 38 municipalities with different zoning ordinances in place. The general assembly put into action repairing vacant and under used buildings. The need to review state zoning laws was looked into by the Housing Commission. Housing issues and concerns change when they get

closer to where you live. There has been push back on some legislation and that is part of the process. Towns have the right to question how new laws affect them. Infrastructure capacity needs to be vetted by each community. A review of the costs and impact on natural resources is necessary. We need to enact appropriate smart growth policies that do not limit local control and input.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

EXPERIENCE! I have a much broader experience than my opponent regarding the inner workings of government and budgets. I have worked hard to address the needs of my constituents and district, especially supporting District 35's largest employer the University of Rhode Island.

I believe I have demonstrated that I am a trusted candidate that does what is needed for my constituency.

My priorities will be the University, addressing healthcare concerns, and the environment

7. Y/N: Will you support legislation that strengthens and codifies voting rights in RI?

Yes



House District 35
Jennifer Nerbonne
Republican

1. Many residents feel that Rhode Island's education funding formula needs reform. What would you recommend to the recently appointed Education Funding Commission?

Rhode Island has a major spending problem. Too often, the answer to every issue seems to be: throw more money at it and hope it gets better. But more spending does not automatically mean better results.

We see this in education. Towns are taking on enormous school construction bonds while the state contributes through RIDE, which is funded by taxpayers. With declining enrollment in many communities, how can towns and the state sustain this level of debt and spending?

This year, Rhode Island placed a three-year moratorium on new charter schools, paused expansions of existing charters, reduced the permanent

charter-school cap from 35 to 28, and restricted state approval and funding for certain charters.

At the same time, Rhode Island has not opted into the federal school-choice program, limiting options for parents who believe their children would be better served elsewhere. Parents deserve a meaningful voice and real choices in their children's education.

We also need to take a hard look at traditional school budgets. Many districts face declining enrollment while per-student spending continues to rise, reaching extraordinarily high levels in some communities. We cannot keep increasing spending without demanding better results.

The answer isn't unlimited funding. It's smarter spending, accountability, and putting resources where they benefit students.

Parents, educators, and taxpayers should have a meaningful seat at the table. The Education Funding Commission should listen to them and find ways to meet students' needs without simply writing bigger checks year after year.

2. What are your views on the 2nd amendment and gun legislation currently in place in RI?

Rhode Island already has some of the strictest gun laws in the country. We have plenty of laws on the books covering firearm ownership. The issue isn't that we need to keep piling on more restrictions. The issue is that we need to do a better job going after the people committing violent crimes.

Too often, new proposals seem focused on law-abiding gun owners rather than violent criminals. People who legally purchased and responsibly owned their firearms should not suddenly be told they have to give up their property because the law changed.

That doesn't make sense to me. We should be tough on people who use illegal weapons to commit

violent crimes. There should be real consequences for repeat offenders and violent criminals. But we shouldn't be turning responsible Rhode Islanders into criminals over changing laws, technicalities, or rules they had no reason to believe would affect them.

The Second Amendment is a constitutional right, and I believe it deserves the same respect as any other constitutional right.

As your representative, I will stand up for the Second Amendment, protect private property rights, and support common-sense policies that target criminals—not the responsible, law-abiding citizens who are simply exercising their rights.

3. Residents of RI are having increasing difficulty with access to affordable health care services. What are your specific ideas to improve this situation near and long-term?

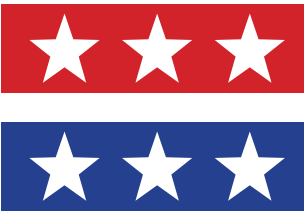
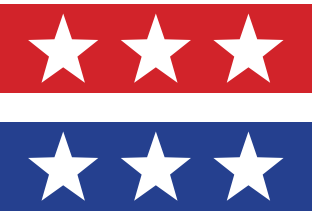
BCBSRI functions as a commercial insurance monopoly in Rhode Island, shielded by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC). Treated as too big to fail, it routinely receives OHIC approval for double-digit premium hikes—sometimes approaching 20% year over year. With few competing commercial options, consumers have little choice but to absorb these increases. BCBSRI faces no real pressure to cut costs, boost efficiency, or improve quality and service.

This dynamic stems from more than two decades of Democratic control. Democrats created OHIC and continue funding its expansion with federal dollars, effectively prioritizing insurer profitability.

As a nonprofit, BCBSRI publishes financials. In 2025, roughly 11% of its \$2.4 billion in premium revenue—about \$267 million—went to administrative and overhead costs. That is roughly one-third higher than the ~8% median for Blue plans nationally. The excess equates to roughly \$72 million that Rhode Islanders pay annually

Teresa A. Tanzi - D34 - opted out

Tina L. Spears - D36 - opted out



Narragansett General Election Candidates

NARRAGANSETT TOWN COUNCIL



Mark A. Brady

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

I was very excited at the prospect of affordable housing initiatives. As Chairperson of the planning board it was the responsibility of the board to implement changes. What became profoundly evident was that none of the state initiatives provided any mandates, incentives, criteria, and or proformance standards for affordability. In fact, affordability is never mentioned directly or indirectly in any of the mandates.

These mandates strip cities and towns of their fundamental right to self govern.. Mandating land use statues as a "one size fits all" for all cities and towns without any consideration for

local market, social, environment, infrastructure, fire and safety, as well as educational impacts is not only fraught with failure it is irresponsible.

Implementation required analysis of short and long term impacts on the local community, not a race to get it done. Building big for the sake of building big does not create affordable housing. In fact it can have the opposite effect depending on real estate market conditions and pressures. Ignoring these conditions is not only irresponsible, it is negligent. Since this initiative started, the USA median cost of homes has increased 0.75%, Rhode Island housing costs are up 5%, in Narragansett for the same period these initiatives have resulted in the cost of a median home increasing 10.5%. Adhoc implementation has resulted in loopholes that have resulted in development that is opposite of affordable. There are no performance criteria, no enforceable standards, and no accountability for not abiding by the law.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

This is the million dollar question. Or in reality a billion dollar question. This needs to be viewed as a national crisis. Long-term federal, and state programs and financing need to be coordinated. Local implementation needs to coordinate with these programs.

What do we want for our children and grandchildren! The burden for fulfilling affordable mandates cannot be borne, and solved, by builders and developers alone. Residents should not be sacrificed for profits. Nor can they be solved by local communities on their own. There is no "flip the switch" solution. People may not want to hear this but it is true.

Bringing together, but not limited to, federal state and local representatives, private and non-profit developers,

landlords, mortgage and industry experts and the university needs to happen to begin discussions on how to address these problems. Need to explore how to balance development, what are the market pressures, how to create more university housing, local incentives for long-term rental alternatives, explore joint state/local/non-profit/private sector building development opportunities in narragansett.

Local incentives and strategies need to be explored and weighed for the ability to influence affordability without drowning the town in debt.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

The focus has been on the treatment plants and sadly the issue has been politicized. The plants are important but what is not being addressed is our aging sewerpipes. They are part of the same problem and need to be solved together. In two other communities where I have served I worked to develop and implement 20 year strategic plans for upgrading, refurbishing, and replacing sewer and water infrastructure including plant facility, piping, pumpstations, the entire system. Sewer plants cannot be replaced overnight. They require phased planning.

A strategic committee of industry, town experts and interested parties needs to be created. The committee needs to create criteria and initiate an inventory of streets and neighborhoods to be identified and prioritized those for replacement by urgency. Phasing of plant upgrades must be coordinated. Twenty year timelines and benchmarks can be created with financing planned and pursued for each phase well in advance of due dates.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Mandates and restrictions are not a solution. Based on direct experience in two other communities I have served, this is not an issue that can be politicized or just solved on a "gut feeling", it must be thought out and planned. A committee needs to be formed made up of all involved parties who can reach a long term solution. The mission is to develop a strategic plan for water, as well as sewer, and coordinate both their implementation. Source underground water aquifers need to be identified including alternative sources. All users and their demand levels need to be identified and quantified. Are we competing with farmers, industry, and turf farms for water? Are restrictions and mandates assessed on all users equally? How are costs and fees assessed between users? Can we develop independent strategic sourcing and storage to soften impacts of drought conditions and alleviate outside dependency? Inventorying and prioritizing infrastructure improvement and replacement needs to be based on urgency. Investment timelines with financing need to be developed and secured in advance Future use demands need to be projected and continually updated against projections. Explore homeowner water well usage as an addition to town water supply. This is the beginning of a solution.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific

capacity at that facility also merits review and potential renegotiation.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Narragansett's water supply comes from Veolia's groundwater sources in the Mink Brook aquifer in South Kingstown. Water bans make clear that this source of supply cannot presently meet peak summer/autumn system demand when aquifer recharge is limited due to long term drought conditions. Narragansett must work in partnership with South Kingstown, North

Kingstown, our General Assembly delegation, the Public Utility Commission and the Water Resource Board to press Veolia for a better understanding of the system's limitations and the likelihood and the timing of securing either additional sources of supply or an interconnection to another system and make that information available to residents. Securing additional sources of supply or an interconnection is complex and subject to extensive regulatory review. In the meantime, Veolia and the Town should seek to dampen demand by incentivizing conservation and efficiency, perhaps by distributing free conservation kits (low flow showerheads, aerators, etc) or offering a utility bill credit for achieving usage reduction goals.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

upgrades. The Town has carried out a few fixes recently that has somewhat improved the odor situation. A recent analysis indicates that further short term improvements of the oxidation ditch can provide additional relief for a limited period. The long term outlook is for major overhaul and expansion which may qualify for outside funding also.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Water supply in Narragansett is provided completely by outside sources; Veolia Water serves most of the Town, and the Town of North Kingstown serves a small area in the north end. It is imperative we communicate our future needs to these entities and do what we can to ensure an efficient and predictable future supply for Narragansett. The Town's Water Supply System Plan addresses future needs predicting a 10% increase in demand between 2021 and 2041. I support this plan and will focus attention on its implementation if elected.

Methods to achieve long-term water savings described in the Plan include low-flow plumbing devices, promotion of water recycling where possible, public education and user fees. To save water from being wasted, the plan also targets leak detection, preventive maintenance and system repairs. In terms of serving added future need the plan suggests coordinating expansion of service areas with the suppliers and assisting wholesale suppliers in developing new sources.

In terms of water quality, we need to ensure that the weekly system inspections inform us of what improvements are necessary. Example: In 2019 it was determined that water quality in the Pt. Judith tank was suffering from sitting too long. So, in 2020 a water tank

I have never approached challenges by first stating a solution.. That would mean I have already decided what the problem is and what the solution should be. How does one person have all the answers on an issue that has so many elements to it and affects so many people in different ways. That limits options, stifles creativity and typically results in a plan that is not a solution but favors one side over another. The development of a joint work group of rental owners, residents, town and industry experts needs to begin identifying and prioritizing what the problems actually are, what the impacts are, and what possible solutions exist. Many of the issues are discussed with emotional resistance by all parties. Specific criteria and requirements need to be established with significant penalties for not abiding by those requirements. We need to start enforcing requirements. Landlords who are responsible, invested in the community, who maintain responsible and respectful rentals should be rewarded. Those properties that have habitual issues should lose the privilege of doing business in the community. This can be done on a points system rather than imposing action because of one incident. Capacity and parking, noise levels for specific parts of the day, and rental duration are issues that are consistently expressed by people and need to be addressed. The committee should regularly review progress and suggest changes to the policy after its implementation to address changes.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

I don't have an agenda or owe anyone. I bring an open mind, listen to experts, and weigh the facts. I look at all sides of an issue, seeking to understand

the actual impact of a decision, both positive and negative, directly and indirectly on all parties. I believe people have the fundamental right to voice their opinion and I have the responsibility to find value in all comments. I work relentlessly to create fairness and equity.

Former Chair Narragansett Planning Board serving 4 years. Over 12 years of Town Council experience in several communities and states, one of which was the fastest growing community in the country for 10 years. Served on finance committees, chaired planning and zoning boards, chaired long-term committees to develop 20 year comprehensive plans for sewer and water infrastructure, police/fire/safety as well as recreation. Two years Narragansett Coastal Access Committee. I have worked with landuse and development projects for private industry and government agencies for over 40 years.

Graduated South Kingstown High School. Hold degrees from The University of Rhode Island in Economics, Urban and Marine Affairs Policy Formation, Masters Degree in Community Planning specializing in Economic and Environmental Impact Analysis. Later in life earned a Ph.D in Engineering. Taught engineering and architecture in an inner city high school.

Propose a working Committee of Business Leaders to enhance local businesses and attract new businesses. Sewer and Water Committee. Resident, Landlord, Student Committee. Joint Committee on Education. Local Ethics Conflict of Interest Board.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands? Note:

Yes



Thomas Q. Callahan

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

These laws are a scattergun attempt to make Rhode Island's housing market more "affordable" by increasing overall housing supply and reducing development costs. Other than comprehensive permits and density bonuses, there are very few provisions specifically targeted to increase the supply of affordable housing. Both of those provisions are proven approaches for incentivizing private developers to increase the sup-

ply of deed restricted affordable units and generally merit support.

Many of the remaining mandates ignore the nuances of local markets. For example, they don't account for the impact that nine month academic rentals have on year round housing availability, and sales and rental prices, in the Narragansett market. For years, the state and URI have failed to adequately invest in student housing in and around Kingstown and consequently, URI now estimates that 6000-8000 students live here. As a result, Narragansett's market has become skewed to meeting URI's housing needs, instead of those of year round families and individuals.

The recently completed Rhode Island Housing 2030 strategy identifies off-campus student rentals as "an external pressure that distorts local housing markets and proposes to explore university/student housing partnerships to reduce competition for housing between students and year round families." We must seize this opportunity to challenge both the state and URI and make Narragansett ground zero for this type of partnership.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

Narragansett should structure and finance its affordable housing programs so as to:

- Assist year round families and individuals earning up to 120 percent of Narragansett's average median income to purchase or rent a home or apartment.
- Invest its resources as recoverable loans whenever possible, perhaps via a revolving loan fund, to provide as much leverage as possible
- Require a long term deed restric-

tion and/or cap profit at sale

- Provide long-term concessionary leases to any project constructed on town owned land
- Make a portion of our real estate conveyance and hotel taxes available for financing soft costs.
- Issue additional affordable housing bonds on a case-by-case basis.
- Evaluate program approach and effectiveness every three years.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

Use the recently completed Wright Pierce twenty year facilities study's (2025) to Increase public awareness, understanding and support for investing in the necessary improvements for, and possible expansion of, Narragansett's Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility, and the townwide collection system of pump stations and collectors that feed it, and, the Westmoreland Street treatment plant. Establish priorities and identify the critical path for improvements, identify sources of financing, phase and execute an implementation plan that is matched to an affordable financing plan composed of federal, state and town sources of funding.

Similarly, we must increase the public's awareness, understanding and support for any improvements that may be required for South Kingstown's Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant on Westmoreland Street over the same 20 year horizon. The terms and conditions of the Narragansett, South Kingstown and URI intermunicipal agreement that govern the allocation of treatment ca-



Michael J. DeLuca

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

The short answer is NO to most but YES to some. In 2025 there were 14 zoning bills passed addressing housing. I oppose the added provisions in many bills altering the state law language from "enabling" to "mandating" actions by the municipalities. Local determination to tailor regulations to fit the town is a "home rule" right that has been severely cut back. Example: "oversized" subdivisions will allow lots as small as 3,000 square feet if water and sewer are available. No mention is made of the existing or projected capacity of these utilities to assimilate higher development density. The outcome could be disastrous. Other egregious changes include removal of the standard that new developments

have "no significant environmental impacts"; the requirement that neighborhood-based modifications must be allowed to exceed certain dimensional standards up to 30% with no notice to abutters or the public and; the requirement that every city and town provide allowance for residential development in one or more commercial zones.

On the positive side a few bills corrected problems created by poorly drafted bills adopted a year prior. The role of the board of appeal (zoning board), related to land development was clarified. The adaptive reuse law adopted in 2023 was revised to add an affordable housing incentive. Dimensional standards for standard lots were revised to include a proportionality provision, (although the language is still unacceptable). And the LMI Housing Act was expanded to include allowance for local repurposing of vacant schools as housing.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

First, we need significant incentives for landlords to rent to year-round tenants. Certainly, there is more money to be made renting to students and tourists, but if we can sway just 5% of landlords to switch, that would result in over 120 new families moving into and becoming invested in the town.

Second, the Low-Moderate Income (LMI) Housing Act should be revised to remove the State mandated density formula for comprehensive permits because the densities set forth do not account for site constraints, roadway condition and other municipal limitations. The new LMI Act allows up to 12 units/acre if there is access to sewer and water, without any condition to assure sufficient capacity. Under the old law density relief was negotiated and resulted in better developments.

Third, we need to find ways to reduce the real cost of housing. The 3 major components are land, labor and materials. The State and towns should

be working to identify publicly owned land that can be surplusd and gifted to non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity to build new housing for low-mod income renters or buyers.

Funding - I have supported the idea of a portion of the real estate transfer tax being dedicated to the Narragansett Affordable Housing Trust Collaborative. I am aware that this body now also receives an annual stipend for acquiring land and /or buildings. These are valuable sources of funds and can leverage significant outside grant funds to supplement the Town's affordable housing program.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

We have to look at wastewater treatment in the short and long term.

At present the Westmoreland Street WWTF is running fine but Narragansett has used up its full allotment, resulting in leasing of capacity from URI. SK is the third owner of the plant and does not use its full allotment. We should investigate short term fixes that may open up capacity without the need for large capital expense. This would include repairing broken pipes currently allowing infiltration of groundwater that unnecessarily gets treated and action to remove private sump pumps from discharging into the system.

The Town's Wastewater Facilities Plan should direct our future decision making for the long term. The WWFP has recently been updated and provides an estimate of future needs. Dialogue should be opened with URI and South Kingstown to project the size and timing of any expansion plan for this facility. We should seek whatever grant funds may be available from the State or federal government and prepare to consider a bond issue 4-8 years out.

The Scarborough WWTF has suffered from overload particularly in the summer months and needs several

mixer was installed to properly aerate the water. Monitoring the chlorine content of water and managing it to disinfect while not over-dosing the system will go a long way to reducing TTHM's in the water delivered to the homes in town.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

The Short Term Rental ordinance in place now has several flaws although I have no objection to the 14 sections or the format of the regulation. I have the following concerns.

The 2024 ordinance includes an annual reduction of 100 permits for 3 years without addressing who would lose their permit and how. Unacceptable. A better approach would be to target a desired number and only lower the permits by natural attrition over time.

Egregiously, the current ordinance allows for short term rental of single rooms in a home without specifying the owner be present. Also, unacceptable. It should require rental of the entire unit. Narragansett already allows individual room rental when an owner-occupant is present.

Also, the current law requires a minimum of 7 nights. I believe this is too much and could be adequately regulated with a shorter minimum.

When reviewed by the Planning Board they suggested the ordinance be amended to limit the number of STR's allowed on a site, a prohibition on using ADU's as STR's, prohibiting use of single rooms as STR's and setting a specific violation for renting less than the minimum night standard. The Board also suggested the level of fines was not sufficient to be a true deterrent.

I would revisit the STR ordinance and review comments made by the Planning Board and public that could improve the ordinance.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

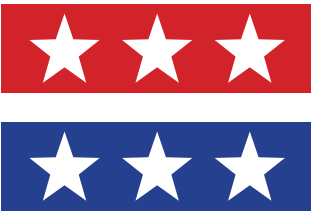
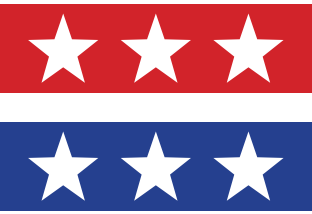
With my 40 years' experience in town planning, the latter 18 with Narragansett, I am fully prepared to step into a leadership role on the Town Council. I have a complete understanding of how local government works and the interactive nature of its many departments. As a 30+ year homeowner and Town resident I am familiar with the issues special to our wonderfully attractive coastal community. We must continue to protect the beauty of our town while doing all we can reasonably to assimilate additional housing and to encourage folks to make Narragansett their full-time home.

My approach is simple - I encourage thoughtful assessment commensurate with the complexity of the issue. Employing the expertise of the Town's administrative staff, and consultants, when necessary, will work to inform proper scale and context of the Council's decision-making. Open dialogue with the public and fact-based decision-making will be my guiding principles.

My top priority will be working to solve our housing dilemma. I will begin by looking at the fourteen ordinances written to presumably conform with changes in State Zoning Law. If elected I will initiate an in-depth analysis and lead the way to affirming validity of the current regulations or writing text to improve them. I am uniquely positioned to lead this charge due to my deep knowledge of the history and interconnectedness of the 50+ zoning bills passed by the General Assembly since 2020 and my working knowledge of the Towns Zoning Regulation.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



James Patrick Durkin
Incumbent

1. Do you support the State mandates (land, housing laws, density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain.

- I support complying with state mandates, and I believe it is ultimately a waste of the Town's time and an unnecessary burden on residents to simply ignore state law. That said, I also believe there are circumstances where a mandate may be unfair, impractical, or simply not fit the individual characteristics of every community. In those cases, I believe the Town has a responsibility to raise those concerns and advocate for an approach that makes sense for Narragansett.

I do not believe that one size fits all when it comes to housing policy. Narragansett is different from many other communities because we no longer have large tracts of underdeveloped land available for major new development. Any statewide housing policy must be considered within that reality.

I also believe year-round rental "ADUs" can play a role in creating additional housing opportunities for some residents. Changes such as eliminating requirements for basements and crawl spaces may also make it easier and more practical to create housing where appropriate. My approach is to comply with state law while continuing to make sure that its implementation recognizes the unique limitations and needs of our town.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

- When the Town owns land that is going to be used for affordable housing, I believe the Town should retain ownership of that land and lease it on a long-term basis rather than sell it. Town-owned land is an asset that belongs to the community, and retaining ownership allows Narragansett to preserve that asset for generations to come.

For the construction and operation of an affordable housing development, I would favor partnering with an experienced third-party affordable housing organization, such as Habitat for Humanity or a similar organization, to build and manage the program. I do not believe the Town itself should become the landlord or take on responsibilities that are better handled by organizations with direct housing management experience.

For financing, I believe a project

could initially be funded through a bond, with that debt ultimately being paid down as the units within the project are sold. This structure would allow the Town to help facilitate affordable housing while preserving ownership of the underlying land and limiting the Town's long-term role in managing the properties.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

- Wastewater infrastructure has already been an important issue during my first term. Councilwoman Vignalli and I have worked to bring greater attention—both among Town staff and the public—to the fact that our infrastructure needs extend well beyond the treatment plant on Ocean Road. We also must address the underground network that carries wastewater to that facility.

Looking ahead, I believe our strategy must address the entire system rather than focus exclusively on the treatment plant itself. That includes advancing the Westmoreland facility connection and working with our partners to address the broader infrastructure needs facing the Town.

A major part of that strategy must continue to address inflow and infiltration, or I+I. A significant percentage of the flow entering the treatment plant is not actually sewage; it is groundwater and water entering the system during storms and other weather events. Reducing that unnecessary volume is critical because every gallon of groundwater entering the sewer system consumes treatment capacity that should instead be available for actual

wastewater.

If we want to make sure Narragansett has sufficient capacity not only today but 20 years from now, we need to continue investing in the underground infrastructure, reduce I+I throughout the system, coordinate improvements with our partners, and approach wastewater capacity as a long-term infrastructure issue rather than simply a problem at the treatment plant.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

- I believe we need to look seriously at developing alternative water sources rather than relying exclusively on restrictions on residents. Conservation is important, but long-term water security also requires us to examine ways of increasing and diversifying the available supply.

One option worth exploring is the use of community wells for larger associations and for properties with substantial irrigation demands, such as homes with large lawns and irrigation systems. Reducing the amount of treated municipal water being used for irrigation could help preserve that supply for essential residential needs.

I also believe we should look at opportunities to improve water efficiency within the existing housing stock. For example, when a property is sold, there could be a process for determining whether it has modern low-flow toilets and other basic water-saving fixtures.

I also want to be candid that I do not believe there is one simple answer to

Narragansett's long-term water challenges. This is an area where I believe the Town needs to do more work. I am committed to examining additional water sources, conservation measures, infrastructure improvements, and other practical solutions that can protect our water supply without making restrictions on residents our only strategy.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

- Because short-term rental regulation directly affects the use of real estate, I believe any new ordinance needs to be clearly connected to the Town's zoning framework. Property owners need predictable rules, and those rules should recognize properties that were legally built and operated under the requirements that existed at the time.

For that reason, properties that were constructed and approved with the appropriate building permits should be grandfathered in, just as properties are generally treated when other zoning regulations change.

Enforcement should also be based on documented violations rather than assumptions. I believe inspections should occur when the Town receives a verified written complaint that identifies a specific alleged violation and includes supporting information. Complaints should be limited to abutting property owners or occupants so that the process remains focused on people who are directly affected by the property in question.

Any fee structure should also be objective and predictable. I believe fees should be based on the number of bedrooms in the property, providing a clear

standard that reflects the potential occupancy and impact of the rental.

Overall, I believe a short-term rental ordinance should protect neighborhoods while also respecting property rights, existing zoning approvals, and basic principles of fair and evidence-based enforcement.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and, if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

- What differentiates me is the work I have already done during my first term. Over the past year and a half, I have worked diligently on behalf of Narragansett and have helped enact ordinances addressing a wide range of issues.

Just as important to me is how that work gets accomplished. I have consistently worked toward consensus rather than treating every issue before the Council as a political fight. Local government works best when Council members can listen to different perspectives, identify practical solutions, and build enough agreement to get things done.

I believe my record demonstrates that I am willing to put in the work, address difficult issues, and work collaboratively with others to move matters from discussion to action.

My top priorities during the next term will include addressing Narragansett's water and infrastructure issues, along with several other important matters facing the Town that I look forward to discussing in greater detail at forum.

7. Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



Rupert Friday

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

No, I do not support the State "affordable housing" mandates adopted since 2023. As a professional planner, I testified at Statehouse hearings on this legislation and recommended revisions — revisions that were ignored. The state's "one size fits all" laws override local home rule zoning and will actually reduce affordability in Narragansett by allowing larger houses on smaller lots. They reverse decades of regulations adopted to guide the character of our neighborhoods and protect the water quality in our salt ponds and the Narrow River. They also strip the town's ability to manage development, limit our capacity to reduce real estate speculation by outside investors, and

weaken our ability to keep existing housing affordable for families, people working in the area and kids who grow up here.

The predictable result: more and larger houses that most families, working residents, and local kids can't afford. Narragansett's market makes "trickle-down" affordability a myth — new construction overwhelmingly becomes short-term and seasonal rentals, not year-round housing for residents. Meanwhile, our town's demographics call for smaller homes — for seniors downsizing and for smaller families. Instead, development trends push the opposite: expanding existing houses and replacing modest homes with larger ones. State mandates should never override a community's ability to plan for its own residents' actual needs.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

The town should adopt zoning regulations that: reduce real estate speculation; limit short term and seasonal rentals; and create incentives for landlords to rent year round. The town should also work with URI to build more student housing. Housing for 2000 additional students will dramatically reduce the market forces that are driving up the cost of housing beyond what is affordable for families and other year round residents who want to buy or rent in Narragansett.

Reducing market forces will help the town retain existing smaller houses that are more affordable. The town also should manage property taxes and sewer and water costs to improve affordability for year-round residents. This is especially important to retain long time low and moderate income residents and senior citizens on limited incomes. The state should replicate Massachusetts and Vermont programs that enable towns to establish a dedicated funding stream for affordable housing. This will enable Habitat for

Humanity and other non-profit developers and Narragansett Housing Authority to build additional housing that will remain permanently affordable. Fines from zoning and short term rental violations should also fund development of affordable housing. In addition, development regulations should require the inclusion of some "affordable" units in subdivisions that create more than 3 lots.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

Narragansett's wastewater capacity is strained on two fronts: seasonal population surges each June–August, and infiltration from leaky sewer lines, illegal sump pump discharges, and large rainstorms. As a result, the Scarboro Wastewater Treatment Plant and several pump stations are routinely overtaxed. Narragansett also annually buys extra capacity in the regional, "Westmoreland," Wastewater Treatment Plant owned and operated by South Kingstown from URI because we exceed our allocation. Further, Narragansett loses an economic opportunity because we don't have adequate wastewater treatment capacity for squid/calamari processing at Galilee. Thus, the squid currently gets shipped to Quonset instead of being processed locally.

As a Town Council Member, I will push to get the town's 20-Year Sewer Plan an implementation schedule with prioritized projects and budgeted funding — something it currently lacks. That means: lining aging sewers to prevent stormwater infiltration; repairing, replacing and expanding aging infrastructure at Scarboro; upgrading pump stations for both capacity and coastal storm floodproofing; and coordinating with South Kingstown for similar investments in the Westmoreland plant. Until wastewater treatment

capacity is actually increased, I will oppose extending sewer lines or adding new connections — except as essential for failing septic systems or needed to enable the construction of affordable units in existing service areas. Funding required for treatment plant and pump station expansions must be born by the people creating the need for these expansions and not result in sewer fee increases for long term residents.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Narragansett and South County rely entirely on groundwater and wells for water. Narragansett depends on South Kingstown and North Kingstown to protect the well fields and aquifer recharge areas from pollution and development that reduces recharge. Our water demand problem centers from June through August when a dramatically larger summer population combines with peak seasonal use for summer activities such as after-beach showering and lawn watering. This is exactly the time groundwater is least available and aquifers are stressed because of weather and recharge patterns. Beyond raw water capacity limits, daily and weekly demand peaks strain water suppliers' ability to refill water tanks.

System stress from peak demands is likely what causes water quality issues. The town should adopt strategies from Cape Cod and Jamestown to manage our limited water supply. We should initiate a marketing campaign - in partnership with landlords and rental agencies - so summer visitors and second home owners understand Narragansett's dependence on well water and create a culture and ethic of water conservation. This campaign would encourage and incentivize

homeowners to use drought-tolerant landscaping, discourage new irrigation systems and encourage timing of landscape plantings so they do not require summer watering. Finally, the town must hold the water supplier accountable for maintaining water quality and meeting state and federal standards.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

An effective ordinance must: ensure guest safety; minimize neighbor disturbance; establish accountability and predictability for landlords and rental agencies; cap the number of STRs; be self-funding; and be enforced.

Specifically: STRs should require annual registration/permits. Registration should be open in year one; if the desired cap is lower than the first year registration, the number would shrink through attrition until the cap is reached. Existing registered STRs in good standing (no significant or recurring violations) should be renewable, while those with significant or recurring violations should be barred from re-registering the following year. After the first year registration, applications would be placed on a waiting list with priority for any new registrations given to those locally owned.

Applicant properties must be inspected for safety and to certify the number of bedrooms, maximum permitted occupancy, and adequate off-street parking. Safety, water use, parking, noise, and local amenity information must be conspicuously posted inside each unit. Registration fees should fund the entire program. Violation fines should be high enough to deter bad actors. Violation revenue should be allocated toward the development of permanently affordable housing. Violation records should be posted publicly for accountability.

Minimum rental periods should be

7 days as recommended by the Crane Report on Affordable Housing — except in the off-season, when shorter stays are allowed but limited to one rental per 7-day period.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

As a professional planner, I have experience helping many coastal towns with development and growth issues similar to what Narragansett faces. My strong environmental science and planning background gives me a deep understanding of water quality protection, watershed management, climate change and coastal hazard planning. I'm a trained mediator with experience building community consensus on complex and divisive issues. My professional experience working with Rhode Island's General Assembly and state agencies can help to build bridges with the state. I bring this experience, expertise and a vision for Narragansett's future to Town Council.

My top priority is stopping the erosion of the town's neighborhoods and sense of community. This means stopping the takeover of our town by outside investors and people who don't live in Narragansett. We need to stem the loss of families and help seniors age in place. We must take steps to keep our existing housing more affordable – including managing the costs of taxes and sewer and water fees for year round residents. Maintaining the quality of life, sense of community and schools and leaning into the town's natural beauty, outstanding outdoor recreation amenities, and historic houses - is essential to attracting new families and stopping the town's population loss.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



Jill A. Lawler

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

No, I support local control on Zoning. Municipalities should be able to determine responsible growth as they deem fit. I don't support the zoning amendments put forth by the current Town Council which they claim implement the State mandates. As well documented by expert reports, these changes would result in less affordable housing and will promote the interests of developers and investors and not the full-time residents of the town. I would join forces with other Cities and Town's to support preserving Home Rule for all Municipalities.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

The Town could use the 3 Million Dollar Bond to purchase existing starter homes and engage the Narragansett Housing Authority to oversee the homes. This would provide immediate

year-round housing units. Rent collected could be used in the future to buy additional homes. The current Town Council's efforts to build Affordable Housing on Town owned land has not come to fruition. Because there is little land available that the town can afford, we must pursue public private partnerships for affordable housing development.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

I would call for an immediate moratorium of new tie-ins to the sewer system. The peak summer tourist season takes a severe toll on the system as it cannot keep up with processing the waste. Rental Homes packed with more people than it's designed occupancy puts strain on the sewer system. I would direct the Town Manager to apply for Federal Grants to improve our facilities given their proximity to Narragansett Bay.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Many Towns are concerned with water supply issues; this is not unique to Narragansett. Everyone should be mindful of water conservation. Narragansett Town Residents should not have to restrict their water usage so that the rental community can run their businesses in our neighborhoods. If water restrictions are necessary, they need to be enforced at rental properties so that the burden does not fall unfairly on town residents. Narragansett should also look into alternative water sources beyond Veola and North Kingstown.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

Short Term Rentals (STR) are neighborhood killers. Narragansett has

always had summer rental homes, but the number of rental homes has increased dramatically and the balance is off. The summer STR market combined with the academic year rentals has artificially inflated housing prices, making homes in Narragansett among the most expensive in the state, and unaffordable to young families. The Town passed a strong STR ordinance in 2024 and a group of landlords sued to stop it on procedural grounds. Despite demands from residents for a STR ordinance, the current Town Council has done nothing other than hold a workshop. The key elements are to cap the number of STR, enforce the designed occupancy for the rentals, parking and noise ordinances in our neighborhoods.

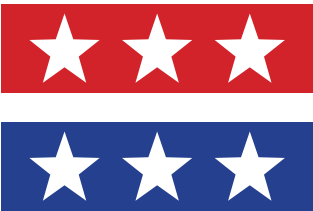
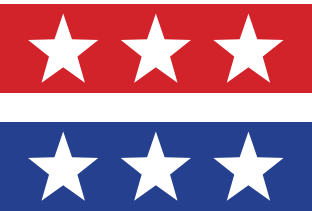
6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

I have the experience necessary to conduct town business on Day One, no learning curve. The current Council has enacted many policy and zoning changes which need to be corrected immediately. I would call for an imme-

diate moratorium of new sewer tie-ins until the Town fully evaluates capacity and conditions of our facilities. I would direct the Town Manager to investigate Federal Grant Opportunities for our wastewater facilities as they are in an Environmentally fragile area being so close to the Narragansett Bay. I am in favor of signing onto the Portsmouth Joint Municipal Action fight back against State mandates. Infrastructure that needs to be further addressed are roads and maintenance of town buildings. I would investigate ways to tax rental properties at a higher rate as they are businesses operating in our residential neighborhoods, provide tax credits for year-round rentals. Lastly, keep protecting our Town's crown jewel, the Town Beach, utilizing a sound resiliency plan for the next generations to enjoy.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



Narragansett General Election Candidates

NARRAGANSETT TOWN COUNCIL



Alexander T. Menzies
Incumbent

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws?

I strongly support expanding affordable housing opportunities in Rhode Island because families, seniors, young adults, and longtime residents are all feeling the pressure of rising housing costs. Narragansett is not affordable, and housing challenges affect communities across our state. That is why Rhode Island has established housing mandates and why local leaders must remove unnecessary barriers and find responsible ways to make it attainable for people to come into our community to live here.

Several factors influence Narragansett's housing market, including our lucrative seasonal rental market. While short-term rentals support property owners and the local economy, they can also reduce housing availability for year-round residents. We need a balanced approach that respects property owners, supports local businesses, and encourages more affordable housing

for families who want to live and work here.

I am proud to have led the Narragansett Town Council in supporting the construction of affordable housing units for the first time in more than 20 years. That is meaningful progress.

Affordable housing also means helping current residents stay. Seniors should have reasonable flexibility to add rooms for caregivers, allowing them to age safely at home rather than enter assisted living. Families should be able to create additional space for adult children who cannot afford homes of their own.

I was proud to attend an affordable housing conference in Washington D.C., and we are now implementing many of those valuable ideas in our town.

Thoughtful compromise can help us build a stronger, more sustainable year-round community.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

Affordable housing programs in Narragansett should be practical, fiscally responsible, and focused on creating real housing opportunities while protecting taxpayers and strengthening our infrastructure.

We have already taken meaningful action by supporting the construction of actual affordable housing units, using housing bond funds previously approved by Narragansett voters. We are also incentivizing short-term rentals to transition into year-round housing, helping more families put down roots in Narragansett and send their children to our public schools.

Moving forward, affordable housing should be funded through a combination of voter-approved local resources, state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, developer contributions, and incentives that make better use of existing housing.

Most importantly, we cannot discuss additional housing without discussing infrastructure. Our wastewater systems, roads, water capacity, public safety, schools, and other essential services must be able to support additional housing. Improving this infrastruc-

ture must be a priority as we plan for responsible growth.

Narragansett should continue doing its part, but the financial burden cannot fall solely on local taxpayers. If the state is requiring municipalities to meet housing mandates, then state and federal governments must be meaningful financial partners - particularly when it comes to the infrastructure necessary to support those mandates.

We can expand housing opportunities while remaining fiscally responsible, protecting our existing residents, and preserving the community we all value.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

I have strongly supported - and will continue to support - the critical improvements needed at Narragansett's wastewater treatment facilities. These challenges did not develop overnight. They have been identified in the Town's 20-year plan for many years, and previous Town Councils faced many competing priorities and difficult decisions about where limited resources should be directed.

When this Council took office, we recognized that the wastewater system had reached a point where further delay was no longer responsible. The time had come to act. While these improvements are more costly today than they would have been a few years ago, waiting any longer would only increase the cost and risk for future taxpayers.

That is why we invested in comprehensive auditing to better understand our system's needs, funded critical equipment before problems became emergencies, addressed infiltration and inflow at both wastewater facilities, and successfully tackled longstanding odor concerns.

We are also working collaboratively with URI to address capacity at the Westmoreland facility and develop responsible, long-term solutions.

I understand that every Town Council must balance many important community needs. Our responsibility now is to build upon the work that came

before us and confront the challenges in front of us. I remain committed to making thoughtful investments today that protect taxpayers, our environment, and the infrastructure Narragansett will depend on for generations.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Protecting Narragansett's water supply and ensuring residents have access to safe, reliable water requires both immediate action and long-term planning. This Town Council has taken these concerns seriously and believes we must be proactive rather than wait for a crisis.

Earlier this year, we worked directly with South Kingstown to develop an odd-even water-use ordinance designed to reduce demand while providing residents with a reasonable and predictable approach to conservation. Unfortunately, worsening drought conditions ultimately led Veolia to institute a complete outdoor water ban.

Conservation cannot simply be about restrictions. We need to work closely with Veolia to better educate residents about our water supply, drought conditions, and practical ways every household can use water more efficiently. Councilor Donna Vignali also recommended exploring a rain-barrel initiative, including a potential rebate program, to help residents conserve water and reduce unnecessary demand. Every household can play a role, and collectively, small changes can have a significant impact.

At the same time, conservation alone is not a long-term water strategy. Narragansett must remain open to exploring additional and alternative water sources, including potential connections or partnerships involving Scituate, Kingston, Providence, or other communities.

Water is essential to our residents, businesses, environment, and future. We need to conserve what we have today while thoughtfully planning for a

more reliable and resilient water supply for generations to come.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

A responsible short-term rental ordinance should begin with balance, enforceability, and respect for everyone who calls Narragansett home. This Town Council has already brought landlords, tenants, students, families, year-round and part-time residents, and local business owners together for a round-table discussion. That conversation reinforced something important: there is far more that unites us than divides us.

Short-term rentals are a significant part of our local economy, but we must also protect the peace and stability of our neighborhoods. Any ordinance should consider:

- Clear occupancy limits that are reasonable and enforceable.
- Different minimum night stay requirements for peak and shoulder seasons, recognizing the needs of neighborhoods while supporting local businesses outside the summer season.
- Strong accountability and enforcement, with straightforward rules that property owners, renters, neighbors, and enforcement officials can easily understand.
- Incentives to create more year-round rentals, using legally permissible approaches that encourage housing for families and residents.
- Exploration of a potential cap on the number of current short-term rentals, if legally permissible, while respecting and protecting property rights.
- Meaningful consequences for repeat violations, while recognizing responsible property owners who follow the rules.

Many tremendous Narragansett families own rental properties, and we have heard directly from owners who support reasonable short-term rental regulations.

This issue cannot be solved by treating neighbors as opposing sides. Compromise is imperative. By listening to everyone affected and focusing on

what we share - a safe, peaceful, vibrant Narragansett - I know we can find common ground and develop an ordinance that works for our entire community.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

I am a proud Narragansett Mariner. I was born and raised here, and for all of my 33 years, Narragansett has been my home.

I grew up in the Narragansett Public Schools, played sports through Parks and Recreation, spent countless days at Christofaro Playground, learned to play basketball at the Boone Street courts and was the winning pitcher for my Little League Team. I worked seven summers at the Town Beach, sang in the high school chorus at the Festival of Lights, and studied regularly at our public library. I attended URI and Boston College for graduate school. Narragansett helped to shape me into who I am today.

That connection inspired me to serve on the Narragansett School Committee, where I served as Vice Chair, and helped to establish a student representative position so students will always have a voice at the table.

For the past two years, I have been honored to serve as President of the Narragansett Town Council. Narragansett raised me and educated me. It gave me friendships, opportunities, mentors, and a deep appreciation for what it means to know your neighbors and care about the place you call home.

My top priority moving forward is creating opportunities for more families to call Narragansett home and expanding year-round, attainable housing. We need to invest responsibly in our infrastructure and find thoughtful compromise when structuring our ordinances - balancing housing opportunities, property rights, and neighborhood quality of life.

I will work hard to continue to earn your support.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



Jesse Pugh

1. Do you support the State mandates (land use, housing density, etc.) that resulted from the 2025 Affordable Housing Laws? Please explain

I do not support the state mandates in the way they were written and passed for a few reasons.

The legislation does not include a provision requiring newly built or newly designated housing under the new regulations to be affordable or occupied year-round, and it doesn't add any new safeguards preventing those units from later becoming vacation homes, second homes, or short-term rentals. Without a current short-term rental ordinance in town, this is a critical point. What this legislation does is increase the size of new houses on small lots, pumping up their value as short-term rentals, without guaranteeing any new housing stock for people to live here year-round.

While I do believe there are times

where state mandates are appropriate and I do not disagree with everything in the bill, I also believe cities and towns should have autonomy over their zoning regulations. A one-size-fits-all solution is not realistic and can have adverse effects when towns vary from one to the next. In coastal, investment property-heavy areas like Narragansett, increasing the sizes of houses without restrictions on how these units are used doesn't stop the housing stock from drifting even more toward seasonal or investment use.

2. How should affordable housing programs be structured and funded?

In Narragansett, we face not only a lack of affordable housing, but a general lack of available housing. When creating and maintaining affordable housing programs, the concept of attainable housing should also be considered as part of the overall strategy. Narragansett's housing market faces multiple competing pressures: URI students competing for rentals during the school year, a strong summer rental market, and the second-highest concentration of short-term rentals in Rhode Island, behind only Block Island. These competing markets put pressure on an already limited supply of year-round housing.

Any affordable housing program should be structured to create housing that remains affordable and available to year-round residents over the long term. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including state and federal housing programs, real estate conveyance fees, public-private partnerships, and local incentives that encourage the type of housing our community actually needs. We also have the ability to earmark local rental registration fees, specifically short-term rental fees, to use not only for an ordinance enforcement program but also for affordable housing programs.

I would prioritize programs that support affordable and workforce housing,

starter homes, opportunities for seniors to downsize, and the redevelopment of appropriate properties. I would also support incentives for property owners who make rental units available year-round rather than seasonally.

Any affordable housing program must have long-term affordability requirements (deed restrictions) to ensure those units continue serving year-round residents rather than eventually becoming student rentals, seasonal rentals, or short-term rentals.

3. What will you do during your term to ensure the residents of Narragansett have proper waste treatment capacity now and in the next 20 years?

The recently completed Wastewater Facilities Plan gives us a roadmap, but the important part now is following through on it.

If elected, I would push for the Town Council to review progress on the plan annually, as recommended by the Planning Board, and establish clear priorities and timelines for the most critical projects. We have aging equipment at the Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility, pump stations that need upgrades and flood protection, and capacity issues that need to be addressed before they become emergencies.

I also believe we need to properly address the amount of groundwater and stormwater entering our sewer system. Finding and eliminating those sources should be a priority alongside the larger capital improvements.

That same emergency/prevention mindset also means being realistic about development. When considering zoning changes, new development, or sewer expansion, we need to understand the impact on treatment capacity before making those decisions.

Finally, these improvements will be expensive, so I would aggressively pursue state and federal grants and low-interest financing, and make sure projects are prioritized so we're

addressing the greatest needs first. One opportunity is partnering with state and federal agencies to expand seafood processing at the Port of Galilee, paired with funding to expand treatment capacity at the Scarborough facility to handle the added wastewater that growth would generate. It would be a win for town residents, businesses, and local jobs, while shifting most of the financial burden of that expansion away from the town.

4. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Independent testing of both our North End and Veolia-supplied water has shown trace levels of PFAS "forever chemicals" and chlorination byproducts. Both are currently under Rhode Island's legal limits, but those limits continue tightening, and residents are right to want us focused on this. I'd push both suppliers for continued PFAS monitoring, treatment upgrades that reduce these byproducts, and full public reporting of results beyond the regulatory minimum.

Regarding drinking-water supply, this is a problem that cannot be addressed without also acknowledging the population surge the town experiences in summer. The population more than doubling certainly affects the availability of water during that period, and an effective short-term rental ordinance would ease some of that pressure over time, even if it won't show immediate results.

The best way to stay ahead of supply problems is planning demand and capacity years in advance rather than reacting to a shortage. The town already has a Water Supply System Management Plan through the state Water Resources Board. I would push to keep it current and use it to guide real capital

decisions.

Lastly, an effective tool beyond mandates is incentivizing conservation: rebates for efficient fixtures and irrigation, tiered rates for heavy seasonal use, and smart metering that allows residents to catch their own leaks.

5. Outline what you think are the appropriate elements in a short-term rental ordinance for Narragansett. Please be specific.

My proposal for an effective short-term rental ordinance starts with setting an overall cap on the total number of permitted units. It would be enacted as a zoning ordinance amendment, not a standalone business ordinance, giving it the same procedural footing courts have upheld in other Rhode Island towns.

Anyone with a unit currently registered as a short-term rental in Narragansett would be grandfathered in, and that total number would set the initial cap. Their status would not transfer with a sale, and the permit would expire once the property changes hands. Anyone interested in registering would be placed on a waitlist until an available permit opens up.

New rental operators would apply for a special use permit through zoning, not registration alone. This mirrors ordinances in towns like Exeter and Newport that have already survived legal challenge, and we should use that track record as our template rather than starting from scratch.

Permit fees would fund two things directly: a dedicated code enforcement officer and a housing fund that subsidizes rent on units whose owners commit to year-round leases, ultimately increasing our year-round housing stock.

Modeling this on ordinances that have already held up in court gives Narragansett the best shot at something that lasts long term.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

I grew up in Narragansett and am dedicated to working for the year-round residents and families that call this town home. I served on the Town Council from 2018 to 2022 before taking a break to spend more time with my wife and two daughters. I believe we're now at a critical point for housing and zoning regulations. A better balance between year-round housing, college rentals, and vacation rentals is the key to the health of our schools, our local businesses, and our sewer and water infrastructure.

My top priority will be to pass an effective and enforceable short-term rental ordinance. It will be difficult to find solutions to our other challenges without first addressing this one.

Previously, I was part of a very divided council and later a member of a more cohesive one. I understand both dynamics. I've also come to understand that councils often go too far in one direction simply because they have the power to. To create lasting change and make real progress, it's essential to give a little. We've seen policies see-saw and ordinances rescinded from council to council over the last few terms due to swings to the extremes. This is counter-productive to creating policies that last. We'll never see real results when that happens.

There are many well-qualified candidates running in this election. I'd be proud to serve with each and every one. I believe I have the perspective, experience, and ability to work with others that Narragansett needs at this time.

7. Y/N: Do you support the Narrow River Dredging Project as it stands?

Yes



Be Sure to Vote on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

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Narragansett General Election Candidates

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NARRAGANSETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Tammy Jeanne McNeiece
Incumbent

1. What are three things you would like to see the Narragansett School District do differently and why?

Narragansett has outstanding schools with talented and dedicated teachers, supportive families, and a community that values education. I am grateful for the opportunity I have had serving on the School Committee for the past 18 years, and I am proud of what we have accomplished together. At the same time, we must be proactive about the challenges ahead.

First, we need to continue our work discussing and developing ideas and strategies to address declining enrollment. While enrollment at Narragansett High School remains steady, long-term projections show smaller kindergarten classes. The high cost of housing

makes it increasingly difficult for young families to move to, or remain in Narragansett. We need to explore creative ways to find potential savings, while maintaining the high quality education for all students.

Second, we can try to be more proactive in identifying and addressing declining revenue sources, including reductions in state aid and federal grant funding. We should continue advocating for Narragansett while identifying alternative funding opportunities and partnerships.

Third, we need to continually examine how we manage rising costs. Increases in Healthcare costs, instructional materials, technology, transportation, and building maintenance all place increasing pressure on the budget. Continued long-term planning, exploring shared services, and continuing to maintain our facilities can help us remain fiscally responsible without compromising educational quality.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

Our goal is to develop an annual budget that supports every student, advances the goals and priorities of our district strategic plan, and is fiscally responsible. This becomes increasingly difficult when costs are increasing, and state aid and federal funding is declining. When reductions are necessary, I would first advocate for changes that have the least direct impact on students and classroom instruction. We should carefully examine administrative and operational expenses, purchasing practices, and look at any other areas where efficiencies can be achieved.

We may also need to adjust the replacement timelines for technology, instructional materials, and other

nonessential equipment. Extending the useful life of these items, when appropriate, could provide short-term savings without immediately reducing programs or services for students.

Staffing is always one of the most difficult areas to consider because our teachers, support professionals and administrators are the most essential part of our school system. Each year we carefully analyze enrollment projections by grade and school. When enrollment changes, staffing adjustments may be needed. I would advocate to preserve programs that directly support academic achievement and the social-emotional needs of our students. Difficult budget decisions should always be guided by what is best for students, while maintaining fiscal responsibility to our community.

3. What actions will you take to address lower enrollment trends with continuously rising costs?

Declining enrollment combined with rising costs is a long-term challenge facing Narragansett schools. During the past term our School Committee has been discussing enrollment trends and brainstorming potential ideas for savings. This year we commissioned a study to examine available instructional space at each school alongside projected enrollment. We reviewed the findings and recommendations from this study at our summer workshop, and I believe this work will give us an important foundation for thoughtful decision-making as we discuss and explore options.

During the next term, I would like to continue examining how we can use our facilities and resources more efficiently, while preserving the programs and opportunities that make Narragansett schools exceptional. We can continue to explore operational efficiencies and the potential for shared

services and new partnerships as our enrollment changes.

Our goal should not simply be to reduce costs. It should be to thoughtfully plan for the future while maintaining the high-quality education that Narragansett families and residents value.

4. Narragansett High School offers 7 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. How do you think the district should balance expansion in CTE programs with traditional academic tracks and college-prep pathways?

One of the things I am most proud of about the Narragansett School District is the range of opportunities we provide students. Our schools recognize that there is no single pathway to success, and students have different interests, goals, talents, and learning styles.

Our continued focus on academic rigor and high expectations has produced significant gains in math and literacy proficiency levels at the elementary and middle school levels, along with steady increases in SAT scores. We have also seen a 63% increase in students taking one or more AP exams, and more than 93% of recent Narragansett High School graduates took at least one AP course. These accomplishments demonstrate our commitment to challenging and supporting all students and offering robust college-prep pathways.

At the same time, our seven CTE programs provide rigorous, engaging, hands-on learning that connects classroom instruction to real-world skills and careers. CTE programs should not be viewed as an alternative to academic rigor. Our CTE courses incorporate high levels of academic rigor while enabling students to apply what they learn in meaningful ways to prepare for college, technical education, military service or immediate entry into the workforce. As opportunities arise, I support

thoughtfully expanding CTE programs when there is demonstrated student interest, community need, available resources, and a clear educational benefit. We should continue offering students meaningful choices while maintaining the academic excellence that defines Narragansett schools.

5. Do you think the RI State funding formula should be reformed? Please explain your answer.

Yes. I believe the funding formula should be continually reviewed to ensure that it provides equitable access to educational resources for all students, regardless of where they live.

This is a complex issue, and there is no simple formula that will perfectly address the needs of every district. Rhode Island includes school districts with very different demographics, enrollment patterns, property values, student needs, and local resources. A funding formula that works well for one community may not adequately support the needs of another community.

A review of the funding formula should include stakeholders from districts across the state, including both urban, suburban and rural communities. We need to understand how the formula affects districts with different student populations and resources, to better understand if resources are being distributed fairly. I would support a thoughtful review of the formula based on data, student needs, and input from varied stakeholders. The goal should be to ensure that districts with different demographics and needs receive a fair distribution of funding to ensure all students have access to a high quality education and adequate resources in their school community.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your

top priority during your term?

I am very excited to seek re-election to the Narragansett School Committee, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served our community for the past 18 years as the Chairperson of the School Committee. My educational background, professional experience, and perspective as a parent provide a combination of experience that I believe is valuable to the Committee. I hold three degrees in education and spent the past 25 years working as a teacher and school administrator. I am also the proud parent of two Narragansett High School graduates, so I also share the parent perspective.

Over the past 18 years, I have worked closely with my colleagues to develop and revise district policies, establish responsible annual budgets, and support the goals and priorities of our district strategic plan. I am proud of the progress our schools have made and I continue to be impressed by the hard work and dedication of our students, teachers, support professionals, administrators and support from our families and community members who make our success possible.

If re-elected, my top priority will be to continue working proactively to address declining enrollment. We need to explore creative, thoughtful and financially responsible options while preserving the programs and educational opportunities that make Narragansett schools outstanding. I would be honored to continue serving our community and working collaboratively to ensure that Narragansett students receive the high-quality education that our families and community value.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

Yes



Diane S. Nobles
Incumbent

1. What are three things you would like to see the Narragansett School District do differently and why?

If this question had been asked of me, when I first began serving on the Narragansett School Committee in 2004, I could have provided a list of many things that I would have wanted the Narragansett School District to do differently. However, at this time, my answer is not what should our district change or do differently; but rather, that our district needs to continue on the successful and continuous improvement path that has made Narragansett one of the top school districts in the state.

As a School Committee, our focus is on improving and advancing the outcomes of our district goals. Those goals are: 1. To prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to

meet the challenges of local, national, and global citizenship; 2. To support retain, and attract high quality staff by providing the structures, systems, and resources necessary to create dynamic learning environments; 3. To create a safe and respectful learning community where all students are known, cared for, and held to high expectations; and, 4. To develop student engagement, identity, voice, and choice to empower students to foster innovation.

By embracing these goals and supporting our schools' administrators, teachers, and staff; our district has continued to evolve and achieve. Narragansett students have been recognized and received numerous accolades and awards in academics, athletics, and in music, drama, and the arts. So, it is not a matter of doing things differently; it is a matter of continuing to move onward and upward.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

Statutorily, in Rhode Island, school committees are tasked with three main responsibilities: hire the Superintendent, write school district policy, and recommend a school district budget to the Town Council. In Narragansett, the School Committee has a defined process for creating a budget; which includes an initial meeting with the Town Council, holding two (three, if needed) budget workshops, where all school department administrators present their budget proposals, the School Committee budget vote, the public hearing on the school budget with the Town Council, and a Town Council/School Committee workshop, if necessary. I describe the process to let citizens know that it is a well thought out schedule of public meetings and workshops.

In addition, by an existing Town Council Resolution, the School Com-

mittee is directed to apply the equivalent of 3% of the full school budget to asset protection and to hold 2% in reserve for unanticipated emergencies. The School Committee maintains a 10 year Capital Improvement Plan, developed by a sub-committee, which oversees its creation and review. So, if reductions have to be made, it is usually a matter of adjusting the timeline of one of the proposed capital improvement projects.

The Narragansett School District budget increases have consistently been below the yearly CPI. And, according to the RI Auditor General FY '24 study, compared to other school districts, Narragansett's total percent of the Town Budget is only 39.8%. This is unusual because in most town budgets the educational appropriation is much higher.

3. What actions will you take to address lower enrollment trends with continuously rising costs?

Between October 2019 and October 2023, all districts in Rhode Island had declining enrollment with the exception of 4 districts in the northern part of the state, which had 4.3 percent increases or less. In fact, since 2001, Rhode Island public school enrollment has declined 15% (-23,400 students).

Enrollment decline is most evident in the southern coastal districts in the state. And, due to demographics and housing affordability in our area, the enrollment decline is projected to continue. As our enrollment numbers decrease, the School Committee makes staffing adjustments to reflect the number of students in each grade level. For example, staffing changes for 2024-25 budget had a reduction of 4.25, 2025-26 had a reduction of 9.05, and 2026-27 has a reduction of 1.5.

Other successful actions that the School Committee has taken to mitigate lower enrollment is the establishment of our Pre-School Program,

which provides affordable educational opportunities for three/four year olds, has 7 fully subscribed classes of 15 students each; and has earned a Five Star accreditation from Bright Stars. The establishment of our seven popular CTE Programs, which prepare students for college, apprenticeship, and/or employment, have created an influx of students.

The School Committee has begun studying the sharing services model, where two or more districts share some administrative personnel and/or other educational services. For example, sharing personnel in hard to find key areas, such as, special education, finance, transportation, operations and other administrative areas. This would provide savings.

4. Narragansett High School offers 7 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. How do you think the district should balance expansion in CTE programs with traditional academic tracks and college-prep pathways?

The Narragansett School District developed an innovative high school schedule that allows classes to meet more frequently from 90 class meetings to 120 or 180 class meetings. Due to this schedule, it enables our students to take a wide variety of courses, including CTE courses, academic courses, and electives. In fact, in this year's graduating class, 90% of seniors (86 of 96) took one or more CTE courses. Our CTE Programs are Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Plumbing and Mechanical Trades, Educator Preparation, Digital Media Production, Sports Medicine, Athletic Training and Physical Therapy, and our newest program, Marine Professions.

Our CTE Programs have attracted students from many other districts to tuition into one of our programs. In the upcoming school year, an expected 105 students from other districts will be enrolled in one of our CTE programs;

while only 36 of our Narragansett students are outgoing. In addition, RIDE has changed its reimbursement formula effective this coming school year. In the past, the tuition for an incoming student was the per pupil cost of the student's sending district. Going forward, the cost for the incoming student will be the average of the two schools per pupil cost. In most instances, the new reimbursement method will benefit our district.

5. Do you think the RI State funding formula should be reformed? Please explain your answer.

The 15 year old RI State education funding formula has been controversial since its debut in 2011. It has been criticized for only covering 38% of the K-12 cost of education, which is lower compared to other states, and not being definitive in the amount that towns receive in any given year. The formula was designed to cover core instructional cost. It has been largely regarded as being unsatisfactory in covering the core cost. In our district, the amount of state aid that we have received over the years has not been significant; although we did have an uptick in FY '27, due to an increase in the free and reduced lunch count.

A Blue Ribbon Commission, headed by the Rhode Island Foundation, made a series of recommendations to reform the School Funding formula, to provide broader, more equitable, and stable school district funding. In June 2026, the Legislature formed a joint commission to study the feasibility of the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations. This was done, in lieu of a vote on adopting the new funding formula, primarily due to the estimated \$300 million dollar cost of the proposal.

While I do think that the funding formula needs revision, I would be cautious on ceding to the state more control of our local districts. Already, as of 2025, the state has directed school

districts to adopt 58 unfunded and underfunded mandates. The last time the state provided reimbursement for mandates was in fiscal year 1992.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

Having served on the Narragansett School Committee for twenty plus years, my experience has a historical perspective which differentiates me as a candidate, as well as, a broad based working knowledge of the purpose and function of the NSC. During my time on the Committee, I have served as the Vice Chair, Clerk, Parliamentarian, Policy Committee Co-Chair, Contract Negotiations School Committee Representative, and Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC) District Representative.

My educational and professional background also differentiates me. I earned a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in Educational Human Resources Development. As part of my doctoral studies, I was the main researcher and designer of the Texas Skill Standards System Model. Professionally, I retired after a 35+ year career in Community College Administration in Oklahoma, Texas, and Rhode Island.

My top priority has not changed: it is to provide a quality education for our students at an affordable price to our taxpayers. And, to make sure that every student crossing the stage to receive a Narragansett High School Diploma has the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them to be successful at their next step; be that college, entry into the workforce; apprenticeship, and/or serving in our military.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

Yes



David S. Pavone
Incumbent

1. What are three things you would like to see the Narragansett School District do differently and why?

Three things I'd like to see the Narragansett School District do differently: First, bring food service in-house and offer free, high-quality meals,

ideally grown and prepared by our own students. Between FFA, our agricultural science program, and Marine Professions, we already have the raw material for a nutrition or culinary CTE track. This turns a cafeteria budget line into a hands-on learning opportunity while making sure every kid eats well. Second, expand Career and Technical Education. All Narragansett students already have access to our CTE programs at NHS, and they do a great job preparing students for real careers. I'd like to see participation grow so more students take advantage of them, and every graduate leaves with the confidence and concrete skills to succeed, whether that's a four-year degree, a trade, or straight into the workforce. Third, put solar panels on our school rooftops. We have prime, underused real estate sitting in the sun every day. Generating our own power, and selling the surplus, turns a fixed cost into a revenue source we can reinvest directly into our classrooms.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

We're fortunate in Narragansett to have a budget that's appropriate for both our needs and our wants. Our funds are spent responsibly, and nothing goes to waste. That said, if

inflationary pressure or other budget issues forced us to tighten our belts, I would start by extending the lifespan of our equipment and facilities. Both are in excellent condition, and we have enough operational capacity to weather a temporary issue. Care has to be taken, though, to make sure that deferred maintenance doesn't compound into a large capital expense down the road, which is something we absolutely want to avoid. I would look to cut everywhere else before touching educational programming or the services and programs that directly impact our students. Those come last, not first. I would also push to bring in revenue-producing programs that leverage our facilities and CTE offerings, so we can offset budget pressure with new income rather than deeper cuts.

3. What actions will you take to address lower enrollment trends with continuously rising costs?

Narragansett is one of the highest performing districts in the state while having one of the lowest school tax rates. Some of that is due to our unique housing situation, but a lot of it comes down to the school administration right sizing staffing so resources are allocated based on what our students actually need. Good schools are essential to building a strong community. High performing schools help attract families

to our town and give our residents the confidence to grow their households without worrying about having to move or pay for private school. So while enrollment and costs are partly a school issue, they are also a housing issue. I have been an advocate for good housing policy that lets residents make the changes they need to stay in their homes as their family dynamics change, and for building homes that attract families to our area. Schools are just one part of a much larger equation, and I intend to keep working on all the pieces, not just the ones inside the building.

4. Narragansett High School offers 7 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. How do you think the district should balance expansion in CTE programs with traditional academic tracks and college-prep pathways?

Our CTE programs are designed to give students the confidence to enter the workforce right after completion. They should not be viewed as competing with college-prep pathways. Plenty of students complete a CTE program and go on to college to study the same field further, ultimately entering that profession at a higher level. Some students on certain tracks want to go deep into academic study, and others want a balance of both. At this age, it is import-

ant that we foster that kind of growth and give students room to experiment and develop interests that could turn into careers. Our CTE programs give students confidence that they are prepared to enter the workforce, and they give our community the trained professionals we need to keep Narragansett running. Traditional academics and CTE are not competing priorities. They work together to make sure every student leaves prepared, whatever path they choose.

5. Do you think the RI State funding formula should be reformed? Please explain your answer.

The Rhode Island state funding formula needs refinement, not reform. Its principal goals are sound: making sure every child in Rhode Island has access to an adequate and meaningful education, regardless of where they live or their family's economic means, while treating taxpayers equitably. That is a complex task, and it requires constant adjustment as circumstances change. Does it treat Narragansett fairly? No. The formula does not account for our unique housing situation. Could it be better? Yes. But it gets small, targeted adjustments to get it into the right place, not a complete replacement. The goals behind the formula are worth keeping. What needs work is how it is calibrated for towns like ours.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

As a parent of three children and a business technology leader, I bring both the experience of building high performing organizations and the empathy to do it with compassion. I know what it takes to set a team, or a student, up to succeed, and I know how to do that without losing sight of the people involved, all while being fiscally responsible with the resources we are given. My top priority is to give our students the opportunity to discover, explore, and develop their talents, and to produce the best outcomes for each of them. Every student is different, and Narragansett needs to prepare the next generation of leaders, explorers, educators, business owners, builders, engineers, tradespeople, artists, healthcare workers, and food producers, whatever it takes to keep this one of the greatest towns in the greatest country. Giving every student the room to find their path, without losing sight of the taxpayers footing the bill, is how we get there.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

No



Narragansett General Election Candidates

NARRAGANSETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Justin Wolf Skenyon
Incumbent

1. What are three things you would like to see the Narragansett School District do differently and why?

As a member of the school committee faced with many challenges, I am proud of our success. In addition to our

budgetary concerns, future areas of focus would be to build upon the support of students' well-being by encouraging more off screen outdoor socializing, through expansion of outdoor activities and utilization of our quality sports programs.

Continue to show appreciation for our teachers, students and staff well-being both physically and emotionally by providing a healthy work and educational environment.

Have greater input into the state decision making as it relates to the effects these decisions have on our teachers, students, staff and budget during these uncertain times.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

Narragansett maintains a lean and efficient budget while delivering a high-quality education for our students. We have successfully managed our schools utilizing one of the smallest percentages of the town's overall budget anywhere in the state. Through consistent effort, our budget increases have remained near or below inflation, allowing us to continue offering a wide variety of educational programs and opportunities. We accomplished this,

in part, by retaining ownership of our school buses, prioritizing regular maintenance, and where possible keeping this work in-house.

If pressed to make significant budget cuts in the future, I will work to ensure a community-driven discussion takes place so that the impacts on our students can be carefully weighed against budgetary needs.

3. What actions will you take to address lower enrollment trends with continuously rising costs?

Lower student enrollment is a nationwide challenge. Rhode Island's overall student enrollment is down 15% from its peak, with a 5% drop occurring post-pandemic, signaling a systemic hardship for families. While this is a broad trend, our district and neighboring ones have been more heavily impacted than most. We have closely monitored these trends to plan effectively for the future.

While we wait to determine what direction the state will take, we have worked to encourage student enrollment by creating and expanding our career and technical programs and our pre-kindergarten program all while working with Jamestown to help service their students and will continue to seek other opportunities. As the state of Rhode Island, explores ways to promote

efficient budgeting by encouraging districts to share or combine resources, it is our responsibility to ensure that the best interests of Narragansett residents, teachers and students are respected throughout this process.

4. Narragansett High School offers 7 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. How do you think the district should balance expansion in CTE programs with traditional academic tracks and college-prep pathways?

We have been very successful at balancing a broad range of educational opportunities for our students. We recognize the diverse needs and interests of our students and work to deliver an appropriate education for all. Regarding college preparation, Narragansett leads the state in Advanced Placement (AP) participation, with over 60% of our students taking AP courses to potentially earn college credit. Furthermore, our focus on encouraging students to explore their academic interests has resulted in overall academic improvement across all metrics, including state testing and SAT scores.

The community has consistently encouraged the school committee to remain committed to these programs, and we will continue to support both our CTE pathways and traditional ac-

ademic tracks to ensure every student receives an appropriate education.

5. Do you think the RI State funding formula should be reformed? Please explain your answer.

The state's funding formula has not been reformed in 15 years. Rhode Island Foundation in collaboration with The Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council convened a blue-ribbon committee to study the state funding formula. In January the committee released a major report calling for a complete overhaul of the formula. Districts need to participate to have input when any changes are being considered. It is crucial that we understand and participate in these recommendations. For example, when the state imposes an unfunded mandate, the districts need to have a greater say in these mandates particularly if they are unfunded. For example, when the state mandates that a student requires an out of district placement the city or town needs to absorb the cost of that transport resulting in significant unbudgeted surprise costs of upwards of \$1,000 a school day. Obviously, these costs are difficult to absorb. This is another reason Narragansett is fortunate to own their buses so when out of district transportation is needed the town can more easily absorb the transportation costs.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

As an active member of the school committee, I wish to continue the hard work that has made our schools among the top-rated in the state. Through years of dedication, I bring an in-depth understanding of our school budget, which is vital during these difficult economic times. Additionally, my background serving on the technology committee enables me to help prepare our students to navigate future technological challenges. I have always had great respect for our teachers and staff, and I want to ensure they continue to have the necessary resources.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our community and If elected, my top priority will be to build upon this success. Through my experience as an active community member I am well-qualified to address both our current and future challenges, and I look forward to having the opportunity to continue to serve.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

No response



Carolyn J. Tudino
Incumbent

1. What are three things you would like to see the Narragansett School District do differently and why?

These priorities are already being advanced through ongoing committee work, and it's important to me to see them continue to grow.

First, deeper engagement with the public — not just families, but the broader community through the Town Council — through casual, conversation-style forums that open the door to real dialogue. I believe our District grows stronger through open dialogue, and there's a genuine connection to be built with the residents of our community. We need to keep this District strong and more clearly show the quality of our teaching.

Second, thoughtfully balancing digital technology use in grades K-5 in favor of more hands-on, foundational learning. With AI moving fast, we need to protect our children.

Third, expanding mental health support services, counseling, and social-emotional resources to meet our students' growing needs. In today's world, that support needs to be in place.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

The first area I'd look at for cuts in the annual budget is our buildings and administrative costs — identifying where we can operate more efficiently. That includes examining whether combining grades makes sense, while maintaining a high level of instructional quality.

3. What actions will you take to address lower enrollment trends with continuously rising costs?

The best path forward starts with input from families and the public on what makes the most sense for our community. From there, we've been examining enrollment trends from several angles, and I believe we should focus on reducing our largest expenditures — including a close look at our buildings and the possibility of combining grades — in ways that have the least impact on students' learning and our schools' effectiveness.

4. Narragansett High School offers 7 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. How do you think the district should balance expansion in CTE programs with traditional academic tracks and college-prep pathways?

I love our CTE programs and want to see them continue to grow, including expansion into Occupational Therapy. Just as important, we need to keep strengthening our AP and high-end col-

lege-prep pathways — something we're already well-positioned to do. The path forward is deepening our partnerships with URI, Brown, RIC, and regional businesses, giving students real access on both fronts: hands-on trade pathways like plumbing, engineering, and physical therapy, and top-university tracks in fields like law, medicine, or accounting.

5. Do you think the RI State funding formula should be reformed? Please explain your answer.

Yes, the funding formula needs reform. It's one of the most complicated in the country and leaves major costs like CTE completely outside the calculation, so towns like ours end up covering them alone. The Blue Ribbon Commission's 2026 report is a solid starting point, and I support the state taking on more of that burden — but any changes need a multi-year phase-

in, so we're not blindsided.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top priority during your term?

What differentiates me is my 20 years of experience working in the Narragansett Schools, giving me a unique perspective from the standpoint of parents, students, and staff — and now, serving on the School Committee, I understand the inner workings of the policies, the district, and the administration. I'm non partisan, and I feel this role should never be political. My top priority is keeping both the short- and long term plans focused on top-quality instruction and the well-being of all our students.

7. Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

Yes

Denise M Manzi - no response

Make a Voting Plan

1. Check your registration.
2. Decide how you will vote.
3. Find your polling place.
4. Review your ballot.
5. Learn about the candidates and issues.
6. Follow through. Cast your vote.



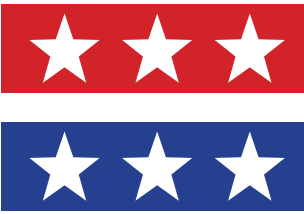
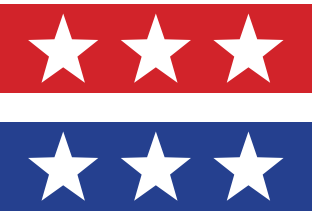
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North Kingstown General Election Candidates

NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN COUNCIL



Linnea M. Drew
Democrat - Incumbent

1. What governance reforms to the Quonset Development Corporation board would you propose to give residents more meaningful representation and oversight?

The Town Council selected a new North Kingstown representative to the Board of Directors who has suggested and had implemented bylaw changes that increase the voting power of the municipal Board representatives. They must now pass with a two-thirds majority any project that includes hazardous materials, requires a special use permit, or requires approval by the state fire marshal. They have also changed the requirements for community notice and comment for their meetings. These are necessary changes that improve

oversight and transparency, but more can and should be done to ensure that Quonset is being a good neighbor to North Kingstown. QDC should also need to bring a project back to the Board if circumstances of the project change (ex. proposed location, a change in the proposed size of the project, etc) and they should impose strict limits on the types of businesses that can operate in West Davisville due to the residential nature of that area. And more importantly, the RI legislature needs to write such changes into law so the Board can't simply change the bylaws back if/when the members of the Board change.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

Harmful industrial development near residential areas and schools is unacceptable. I will advocate for the QDC reforms listed above, including to our legislators and governor. We have been doing similar advocacy on behalf of North Kingstown residents to the governor and other gubernatorial candidates, since the governor holds so much power related to QDC (where most industrial activity takes place in NK) through their appointments to the QDC Board of Directors. We continue to communicate with the RI Department of Environmental Management about the existing asphalt odor complaints and have been successful in getting them to increase their monitoring of one facility, which has resulted in a notice of violation. Council President Greg Mancini and I recently met with this company to discuss these odors and the resulting complaints from residents, and I specifically voiced my concern about not only the odors, but the

contaminants that cause the odors. This is an active issue on the Town Council and in the town administration, and I will continue to push for more information and better mitigation while on the Council and if I'm re-elected.

Lastly, I would be heavily in favor of a town ordinance that prevents a data center from being built in NK as well as a legislature vote to similarly prevent a data center from being built in QDC; these have major impacts on energy usage and noise pollution and I do not think this is an appropriate place for such a facility.

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

The most direct thing the town can do to address housing costs is to support increased housing for varied income levels through thoughtful planning processes, which I am very supportive of. The increase in housing being built near public transit and on roads that have existing public transit is a great example of this, and as someone who uses public transit myself, I think this is a great way to encourage people to set down roots in North Kingstown. However, we can also do other things outside of increasing development that help young families afford to live here. One very impactful such action would be to have on-site before- and/ or afterschool care for the elementary schools that's run by the NK Recreation Department. Most NK families don't have a non-working parent, but the wraparound care spots have limited availability and are both expensive and often inconveniently located. Similarly, I would like to find creative ways to add

affordable summer camp options to the town's offerings, as summer childcare can be both stressful and expensive. These seem like small changes, but they could be hugely impactful for working families.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

The Town Council has done an excellent job in recent years of keeping tax increases below the rate of inflation, and we have not raised taxes at all in the past three budgets while maintaining exemplary municipal services and increasing school department funding. North Kingstown has invested more in its schools on a percentage basis than any other municipality in the state, and I think that is reflected in the exceptional quality of education in our town. But I recognize that residents are experiencing rising costs across the board and are worried that their taxes will skyrocket due to the large projects the town has voted to fund, and the following are things that the town has done and/or will do to ensure we complete projects, fund the town and schools, and keep taxes affordable: The town has excellent financial management, which has resulted in a very nice surplus in our general fund that can be used as needed for important projects without needing to increase the operating budget of the town. We have an excellent bond rating, which will get us the best rates possible for the middle school and public safety bond projects and keep costs to the taxpayer as low as possible. And we have timed these well (which also speaks to the solid financial planning for the town) such that these

two new bonds will start to affect the budget just as older bonds are aging out and no longer factoring into the debt service budget.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock. How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

Our Planning Department and Planning Commission exist for this exact reason, and therefore the people that the Town Council appoints to the Planning Commission serve an incredibly important role in our town. I have appointed and will commit to appointing in the future only people with the experience and demonstrated thoughtfulness required to assess the impacts of continued growth on our municipal assets and services and plan accordingly. Additionally, the improvements being undertaken around North Kingstown are already addressing some of these issues: the new Wickford Middle School and improvements to Davisville Middle School and our elementary schools address the needs of aging schools with a growing population; the new Public Safety Complex and improvements to the Municipal Office Building will allow the town to continue to serve all residents of the town; and the Post Road water main and sidewalk projects will improve water delivery along that corridor to existing and new homes and allow the people who live there to safely use other modes of transportation than just motor vehicles, which has a positive affect on our roads.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

I think my experience on the Council, my current lived experience raising a young family, and my science background and data-driven viewpoints differentiate me from other candidates, particularly those candidates running as Independents. As a current Town Councilor, I know the issues happening in town this very moment and will continue to work on them without interruption if I'm re-elected. I know the town as a resident and someone who loves living here, but also as someone who understands where the town has power for direct action and where we need to push other stakeholders. The past two years, I have been the lone voice on the Council advocating for young families from the perspective of someone living it right now - juggling school hours in a post-pandemic world where childcare options have diminished but costs have risen, working just as hard as my parents for less money, wondering whether my generation will be able to hold back climate change enough for my children and grandchildren to enjoy this planet. I have also been the lone scientist on the Council, and during a period in NK where we are facing issues of environmental contamination in our air and water, we need scientists in government more than ever.

My priorities will be: (1) QDC reforms that increase resident input and transparency; (2) collaborating with the School and Recreation Departments to implement changes that benefit young families; and (3) increasing renewable energy in NK and mitigating effects of climate change.

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes



Gregory A. Mancini
Democrat - Incumbent

1. What governance reforms to the Quonset Development Corporation board would you propose to give residents more meaningful representation and oversight?

Given the current exigent circumstances at Quonset, I took the initiative to work with new NK Town Council appointee to Quonset Dave Miele, Esq. the state Secretary of Commerce, and the Quonset administration to lobby Quonset to amend their by-laws to increase community notice and comment obligations and require a 2/3's

majority for any proposed project that has hazardous material, needs a special use permit, or approval from the state Fire Marshall's office.

The Quonset board acted swiftly on this request and unanimously passed this proposed amendment this May. Given the fact that this 10-person board consists of 6 appointments by the state, 2 from NK, 1 from East Greenwich, and 1 from Jamestown, local communities will now have more input if we work collaboratively, which I have every expectation we will.

In addition, I am asking each gubernatorial candidate to consult with the town regarding any new potential appointees. Lastly, the residents of any community that could host any of the aforementioned projects within in its municipal boarders, regardless of whether or not it is within the jurisdiction of a quasi-state agency, should have a say in whether these types of projects are sited and there should be a community host agreement to memorialize the terms and conditions under which that will occur. That is what our town should advocate for with the state and that is what I will do if re-elected.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

Harmful industrial development near residential areas is unacceptable, particularly when it is near affordable housing units and schools.

Ever since the town received complaints, we lobbied the governor and the Department of Environmental Management to increase policing of

existing air pollution regulations on a regular basis, which recently resulted in at least one notice of violation being issued. In addition, myself and fellow councilor Linnea Drew recently met with a local company that has been emitting asphalt odors in the West Davisville area to relay our community's concerns. During the meeting the company committed to installing new 10 new pieces of equipment that they said will eradicate the smell and toxins currently being emitted. Notwithstanding this assertion, we will continue to monitor the situation. We will also continue to aggressively lobby the governor and state agencies. In addition, we will pursue making our state air pollution regulations stricter with DEM. Lastly, we have retained an outside environmental law firm to assist us in this regard.

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

Currently, there is a significant shortage in affordable housing stock in virtually every community in our state, including North Kingstown. Locally, we must do what we can to minimize tax increases while continuing to provide good quality municipal services, including providing the resources for a good school system. That will make our town as affordable as possible to live in for all of us, including young professionals and working families.

We also have to work with the other cities and towns to develop policies

and incentives at the state level that will increase our housing stock in appropriate locations (i.e. near train station or other transit areas and in existing commercial corridors) so that housing will become more affordable for young professionals, working families and all of the citizens of our community.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

Over the past 8 years, myself and my fellow Democratic colleagues on the town council laid the foundation that will minimize the adverse impact on taxpayers from the financial impact of these bonds. We balanced our budget every year without compromising government services, and we never had a deficit. During that time we increased our town's reserves by 80 % while never raising taxes more than the rate of inflation. In fact, in the last 3 years we have not raised taxes at all. Consequently, NK has one of, if not, the highest bond ratings of any municipality in the state.

The \$137 million in new debt that the voters approved in 2023 will replace several aging municipal and school facilities (our public safety complex is more than 50 years old, Wickford Middle School is almost 100 years old, and our elementary schools are also aging). As a result of the Democratically elected town council's management of town finances, the town will be able to secure financing for these facilities at the lowest possible cost.

In addition to securing financing

these facilities at the lowest possible interest rate, our continued sound fiscal management of the town along with having a number of existing bonds retire will minimize the adverse impact to the taxpayers in constructing these important new facilities that the taxpayers voted for.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock. How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

Currently, there are 1,742 units of housing that are proposed and under construction in North Kingstown. This is due in part to new state laws, regulations, and policies that are trying to increase our housing stock statewide.

Within these changes to state law, it is still the job of the Planning Commission to ascertain the impact on the infrastructure on our town's water, schools, roads and public services. Each potential development is thoroughly vetted by the Commission to assess these impacts and balance that with our community's housing needs and affordability challenges.

As a member of the council I take very seriously any potential new appointment to this Commission. In fact, in one or two instances I recruited qualified individuals. I have every confidence in our Commission and believe that the decisions they have made and will continue to make have the best interests of the community at heart. That includes addressing impacts on infrastructure, water, schools, roads, and public services.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

What differentiates me is my record and experience. Since I have been on the council, we have had a balanced budget every year while fully funding municipal services and the school department without ever having a deficit. In fact, we increased funding for our schools more than any other municipality in Rhode Island on a percentage % basis. We achieved this without ever raising taxes more than the rate of inflation, including the fact that we did not raise them at all in the past 3 years. Also, over that time we have increased our town reserves by 80%, attained a AA+ Bond Rating and seen our tax rate go from \$18.06 per thousand to \$11.04 with a modest homestead exemption. We also invested in our town facilities like never before. We rehabilitated town hall and made major investments in our parks and town beach.

If re-elected my 3 top priorities will be: 1) Continue to develop a fiscally responsible budget while providing residents with quality municipal services and the resources to provide a quality education to our children; 2) Lobby the state to get more influence over what happens within our town's municipal boarders; 3) Do what we can to address climate change challenges that adversely affect our community.

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes



Vanessa Mascaro
Independent

1. What governance reforms to the Quonsett Development Corporation board would you propose to give residents more meaningful representation and oversight?

North Kingstown is the host community for Quonset, and I believe that should come with a meaningful role in decisions that can directly affect our residents. As QDC Board terms expire, I would advocate for North Kingstown to have a formal role in the selection of designated board members, giving the host community real input into who helps make these decisions.

I would also work with our state delegation on legislation giving North Kingstown greater authority or formal input before QDC approves industries that could significantly affect public health, drinking water, the environment, public safety, or residents' quality

of life. For these higher-impact uses, there should be public notice and an opportunity for local input before leases or other major commitments are finalized.

I would also support cumulative-impact reviews that consider surrounding neighborhoods, drinking-water resources, existing industrial operations, traffic, emissions, and emergency-response demands rather than evaluating each project in isolation. Finally, relevant DEM permit applications, permits, notices of violation, enforcement actions, and significant environmental correspondence involving Quonset businesses should automatically be provided to the Town.

Quonset is an important economic asset, but North Kingstown should have a meaningful voice in decisions whose impacts extend beyond the business park.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

Responsible economic development is important to North Kingstown, but we also have a responsibility to ensure that new development is compatible with the neighborhoods and natural resources surrounding it.

For land under Town jurisdiction, I would support a comprehensive review of our zoning and land-use regulations where industrial and residential areas meet. One area I believe deserves particular attention is our existing buffer requirements. In some locations, the separation between industrial activity and established neighborhoods is simply not adequate. I would support evaluating stronger, more meaningful buffers based on the intensity and potential impacts of a proposed use, including noise, odors, emissions, truck traffic, and potential impacts to water resources.

I would also review whether our

current zoning provides sufficient safeguards for higher-impact industrial uses near homes and sensitive environmental areas, and work with our Planning Department, Planning Commission, residents, and businesses to identify practical improvements.

Quonset requires a different approach because it is state-controlled land. There, I would work with our state delegation to pursue legislation providing stronger protections and a greater local voice in decisions involving higher-impact uses.

Economic growth and protecting quality of life do not have to be competing goals.

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

North Kingstown should be a community where young adults who grew up here, working families, and essential employees have a realistic opportunity to stay or put down roots. I support creating a broader range of housing options, particularly in areas where existing infrastructure and services can support additional residents. That can include smaller homes, thoughtfully planned multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units, and other options that provide alternatives to increasingly expensive single-family homes.

At the same time, affordability cannot be addressed by simply approving development without considering the consequences. New housing should be planned alongside water capacity, schools, roads, public safety, traffic, and the cost of providing municipal services. Poorly planned growth can ultimately increase the financial burden on the very families we are trying to help.

I also believe we should look for opportunities to encourage redevelop-

ment and housing in appropriate existing commercial or mixed-use areas before unnecessarily expanding development into environmentally sensitive or established residential areas.

The goal should be balanced growth: creating more opportunities for people to live in North Kingstown while protecting the qualities that make them want to live here in the first place.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

North Kingstown has made significant investments in our schools and public safety facilities, and the costs associated with those investments were not unexpected. The challenge over the next several years will be continuing to meet the Town's needs while being mindful of the cumulative impact on taxpayers.

The Town Manager is responsible for developing the proposed budget, but the Council has an important oversight role. I believe that means carefully reviewing what is presented, asking questions, challenging assumptions when necessary, and making thoughtful decisions about new spending and financial commitments. As debt service increases, we should be especially thoughtful about additional borrowing and major capital projects by prioritizing what is necessary, considering what can reasonably be phased or deferred, and taking advantage of grants, reimbursements, and other outside funding whenever possible.

At the same time, delaying necessary maintenance can cost taxpayers far more in the long run, so fiscal responsibility cannot simply mean putting projects off. I don't believe responsible budgeting means choosing between investing in North Kingstown and protecting taxpayers. It means weighing

those interests with every decision, maintaining essential services, planning responsibly for future needs, and making sure every tax dollar is treated as exactly what it is: our residents' money.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock. How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

Growth must be accompanied by infrastructure planning. Adding housing without adequately considering water capacity, school enrollment, traffic, roads, public safety, and other municipal services can create costs and challenges that ultimately fall on existing residents. I support evaluating the cumulative impact of development, rather than reviewing each project only in isolation. When several developments are occurring within the same area, we need to understand their combined effect on our infrastructure and services and plan accordingly.

Where improvements are needed because of new developments, the Town should fully utilize legally available tools to ensure developers appropriately help to contribute toward those impacts rather than placing the entire burden on existing taxpayers.

Growth should also respect North Kingstown's character. As we welcome new housing and businesses, thoughtful planning and design should help new development complement the scale, appearance, and character of the surrounding community. We can grow without losing the charm and sense of place that makes North Kingstown special.

The answer isn't to stop development. It's to pursue responsible growth, making sure housing, businesses, infrastructure, and public services grow together while preserving the character of the town we call home.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

What differentiates me is my independence, my willingness to do the homework, and my belief that serving on the Town Council means representing residents first. I am not running with a slate, and I am not interested in approaching local issues through a partisan lens. Good ideas can come from anyone, and every decision should be judged on what is best for North Kingstown.

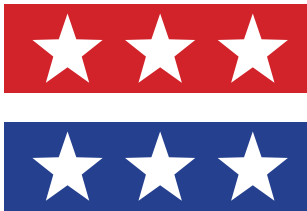
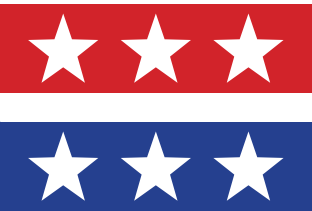
When an issue comes before me, I want to understand it beyond what is presented at a meeting. I ask questions, read the documents, listen to residents, and seek out perspectives I may not initially agree with. Elected officials should also be accessible, and residents should never feel they need political connections to have a concern taken seriously.

My priorities reflect that approach. That means giving residents earlier and clearer information, protecting our neighborhoods, water resources and North Kingstown's character while supporting appropriate economic development, and carefully considering the long-term taxpayer impact of spending, debt and major decisions.

I want residents to have a meaningful voice before decisions are made, not simply be informed afterward. Above all, I will approach each issue independently, ask the difficult questions when necessary, and keep the interests of North Kingstown residents at the center of my decisions.

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes



Kimberly Ann Page
Democrat - Incumbent

1. What governance reforms to the Quonset Development Corporation board would you propose to give residents more meaningful representation and oversight?

While North Kingstown can appoint three of the ten board members, since this entity is in our own backyard, I think NK should get to appoint four to five members. The QDC affects our residents, so we should have the ability to weigh in on what affects us. I would also be in favor of the QDC board making their minutes easier to read as to what actions they take. They report on items, but their jargon is difficult to decipher their actions taken.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

No one wants harmful industrial development in their town or near their children or schools. We need to engage the RI Department of Environmental

Management to monitor and enforce the regulations we have, and report to the town when there are verified violations and thus subsequently report what actions were taken. RI DEM started this process and we need for it to continue. We need a means to report publicly and directly to Town Council as to the actions taken. Within the last year, the Town Council hired an environmental law firm to protect the town and citizens, and to make sure we received truthful information on the environmental impacts of the Quonset Business Corporation.

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

We are making improvements to our schools, we are maintaining a MBTA transit area to make transportation to Providence and Boston easier. We have approved more housing units to

North Kingstown as long as they fit into our comprehensive plan. Although RI is made up of 39 towns and cities in the state, it would behoove us to work with our neighbors to make our state look attractive as it is easy to work and live in two different towns. With more jobs at Electric Boat and other places, NK is growing, not shrinking. I want to maintain our quality of life.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

Our Town Council has appointed a very fiscally responsible Town Manager who is excellent at assessing the financial needs and requirements each year. It is because of his careful planning, that we have not raised the tax rate in three years. We cannot continue to ignore needed infrastructure improvements like the almost 100-year-old Wickford Middle School, and the Fire & Police station that is crumbling in parts.

I trust our Town Manager to balance our debt service with the bonds that the citizens authorized, and that we will responsibly be able to make necessary changes without large tax fluctuations.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock. How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

NK has the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals which are made up of volunteers who make important decisions on potential housing units and housing changes. Their decisions allow or disallow infrastructure changes in NK. I am careful in choosing qualified people for these positions as these citizens influence town folks' lives. I believe that our appointed volunteers are making lawful decisions on the growth of our town and weighing how to properly allocate our resources, without endangering the infrastructure we currently have.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

For the last three years, our Town Council passed three budgets without a tax increase. There was a housing re-evaluation, which was not under our control, but the tax rate did not increase. The three priorities should be: 1) to minimize a tax increase but keep outstanding services. 2) Work together with our school department to balance our budget and keep outstanding schools. People move to communities based on school ratings. We want young families in NK. 3) Work with the state legislature to ensure the businesses in Quonset are working within the law to better the community and not take short cuts that hurt the health of people and value of the homes nearby.

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes



Jessica Plavicki
Democrat

the bylaws also increased reporting and communications requirements. These changes to the bylaws are positive, but not permanent and, therefore, and could be revised depending on the composition of the Board. I support working with representatives to codify the changes into law.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

Access to clean air, water, and food is a fundamental human right. I am opposed to the development of harmful industries in close proximity to our or any other community. The NK community has clearly stated their concern about and/or opposition to the sludge pyrolysis plant (by QSS Biosolids, LLC), the emissions from the Bitumar asphalt processing facility, and the proposed lithium-ion battery storage facility (by GDQ ESS, LLC). I oppose the sludge pyrolysis and battery storage facilities, and am committed to working with local government, researchers, and non-profit agencies as well as concerned individuals to determine the content and potential risk associated with the asphalt emissions. I support recent efforts made by current Town Councilor Linnea Drew and Town Council President Greg Mancini to press for more information about the asphalt associate emissions. We need to continue to push for open and clear communication and accountability from local industries. I believe we can build partnerships with scientists to actively assess the content and potential impact of emission on our community.

I am committed to building bridges between parties interested in community-scientist partnerships and citizen lead science.

Finally, data centers adversely affect the physical and economic health of communities. I would enthusiastically support a town ordinance to prevent a data center from being built in NK and would support statewide efforts to address this looming environmental threat in our already environmentally vulnerable coastal community.

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

Growth is an important feature of a vibrant community. Young professionals and families are understandably attracted to NK given the town's municipal strengths and location. Our community has the potential for positive, sustainable growth given sufficient planning and thoughtful implementation of sensible housing policies that meaningfully factor in affordability. I support the continued investment in the walkability and integration of the town by the addition of more sidewalks and bike lanes to connect commercial spaces and neighborhoods as well connect public transit options such as the buses and trains at Wickford Junction with RIPTA bus stops on Ten Road Road and Tower Hill Road. I also support improving commuting options between North Kingstown, Providence, and Boston. Reliable RIPTA commuting

options could save people money on gas, parking, and car maintenance. I rode the RIPTA to Brown University for 7 years; however, the commuting options between North Kingstown and Providence were decimated in the post-pandemic years. Ultimately, I made the decision to drive to work for the first time in my adult life. I would gladly reconsider my means of commuting if there were improved RIPTA commuter options.

Finally, I support increasing before and after school care at NKSD schools via NK Recreation as well as increasing the affordable summer camp options for NK residents.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

Due to the excellent financial stewardship of the Town Council, NK is building on a sound economic standing with an outstanding bond rating and a surplus in the general fund. This surplus was achieved while keeping tax increases below the rate of inflation and without raising taxes in the last 3 budgets. Simultaneously, NK significantly invested in its school system. The fiscal impact of the new bond debt (for schools and municipal buildings) will be tempered by older bonds ending and no longer being factored into the budget. Furthermore, the strong bond rating will facilitate the successful and fiscally responsible completion of the planned projects.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock. How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

Smart and sustainable growth can be realized by the efforts of an effective Planning Department and Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is responsible for assessing the impact of different projects on municipal infrastructure and services. The Town Council has the responsibility to appoint skilled and thoughtful people to these essential positions so that we can trust in their ability to help NK grow effectively and sustainably. Some of the needs of a growing community are already being addressed by the investment in the new Wickford Middle School and improvements to Davisville Middle School and multiple elementary schools as well as the investment into the municipal office building and new Public Safety Complex. I support continued investments in town planning that connects new developments with public transit and the community as a whole.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

Both my professional and lived experiences have prepared me to be an effective member of the NK Town Council. I am a tenured Associate Professor at Brown University, where I

also lead my own research program investigating how genetic mutations and exposure to environmental contamination contributes to the development of congenital and acquired disease. I am well versed in a range of environmental issues and teach about these issues in my course "Environmental Health and Disease". My breadth of environmental health knowledge has been further developed by my ongoing role reviewing grants on major known and emerging environmental health issues for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences as well as federal science agencies in Europe. My training as a scientist has provided me with a logical, data driven approach to decision making that is grounded in compassion. Therefore, I am well positioned to help address the environmental issues affecting NK and facilitate our community's understanding of these issues. I believe one of my roles as a scientist is to help empower people with knowledge that allows them to protect their health and the health of their families. NK is fortunate to currently benefit from the expertise of Town Councilor Linnea Drew, a scientist and clinical coordinator at Dana Farber. My top 3 priorities are: (1) prioritizing the health and safety of NK residents by investing in our schools and community, (2) supporting QDC reform to ensure local representation and transparency, and (3) protecting and sustaining our coastal ecosystem.

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes



Elizabeth Hill Ross
Independent - Incumbent

and oversight?

I would like to see at least one Town Council person on QDC's board (I tried twice to get on, the rest of the TC rejected me), and preferably two. I understand that QDC is quasi state, but North Kingstown needs to be able to protect itself from sludge plants, asphalt, and other potentially dangerous projects that affect all of the residents. I will attempt, for a third time, to be voted onto the QDC board, if elected in November.

2. What will you do to create permanent protections against harmful industrial development near residential areas?

I would tighten up the ordinances involving ALL development. We need to protect our land, character, residents, and water. I don't feel like this is being done; things are pushed through with near total disregard for all of the aforementioned considerations. We are now fighting carcinogenic asphalt fumes in W Davisville, and a sludge plant that will incinerate sewer from not just RI, but MA, and CT, and all within a half mile of residences and schools, as well

as on top of our groundwater. Who is profiting?

We have 2 battery plants pending in QDC, if they catch fire, they could burn for days, pouring toxic smoke onto all of us. Drive on 403, you will see 27 acres, decimated, soaked in Glyphosate, (Round Up/carcinogen) over our sole source aquifer, so that a non resident can profit, none of it's benefits go to North Kingstown. Why has this been allowed? Why does this town continue to be REactive instead of proactive? North Kingstown must be protected. I believe that there are too many developer friendly people on the council, the boards, and the commissions...at what costs?

3. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to North Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

I am not exactly sure how to manage the housing crisis and current economy, it is not good, but that said, I do not believe that destroying this town, the beauty that attracts people to it, and the water, etc, is the answer. We are at, if not

over, our 10% of affordable housing in all development once everything in the current pipeline is built. We have added a great deal of new housing, with many started or starting soon, and a number more in the pipeline. I think we need to pause and take a much closer look at the bigger picture, how it all effects the town, and how much more we can take. Water is not an infinite commodity, we need to protect it, and I feel that we are not. If elected, one of the first things I would push for is the reinstatement of the Ground Water Committee.

4. What steps do you recommend the Town Council take to balance the growing debt service costs from school and public safety bonds over the next 5-10 years with increasing municipal needs and property tax pressures?

The facts are that millions of taxpayer "annual surplus dollars" are being dumped into the town's (known) excessive "Rainy Day" fund (budget surplus). Being taxpayer's money, I believe that the Town Council should work toward utilizing this surplus money to freeze retiree's property taxes, and to offset any budget increases.

5. Multiple large residential developments are adding units to NK housing stock.How should the Town address the infrastructure impacts of that growth on water, schools, roads, and public services?

This is a huge concern! As someone who has been here for decades, I am very worried for North Kingstown. Water is number 1 on my list, we already have town wells that are shut down, and PFAs are leaching into both town and private wells. We need to get a hold of all of this before we add anything else. We are rapidly turning into a city, destroying the beauty that everyone was originally attracted to. Again, who is profiting? It is heartbreaking, and very worrisome.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

I am not a politician, I am not a business owner, I do not profit from ANYthing in this town. I have been here... on, off, and around, for my entire life. I was concerned enough about the local government and what it was doing

to North Kingstown to run for Town Council in 2024, and apparently a lot of people agreed w my views. I believe in listening to the people, I believe in responding to the people, I believe that some times 3 minutes is not enough and that you should not call the Town Hall "The People's House" while not letting them speak. I show up. I answer emails. I have attended nearly everything that I have been invited to. I am the only one who has been present at every single Town Council meeting since having been sworn in. CLEAN WATER. OVERDEVELOPMENT. TRANSPARENCY, and getting the residents involved. (I have run a town group for over 10 years in an attempt to let people know what is really going on in North Kingstown while giving them a voice in all of it). TAXES, which are about to go up (11+%) primarily because of the bonds. (An elderly tax freeze).

7. Y/N: Should the town invest \$12.6M to build a PFAS Water Treatment Facility?

Yes

Voice Your CHOICE

Be Sure to Vote on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.



Yes



Yes

SCAN FOR VOTER SERVICES



North Kingstown General Election Candidates

NORTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Erin West Earle
Democrat - Incumbent

1. How would you propose managing cost overrides on major committed projects?

Managing cost overruns starts with strong planning, realistic contingencies, and consistent oversight. Before a project begins, the district should clearly understand anticipated costs, timelines, risks, and potential unexpected expenses. Contracts should establish clear expectations for scope, budget, timelines, and communication while protecting the district whenever possible.

This is particularly important as North Kingstown undertakes significant school construction and renovation projects. During my tenure on the School Committee these last four years, I have helped advance planning for our new middle school, supported the selection of our architect and Owner's Project Manager, and worked through the RIDE approval process that ultimately led to voter approval of the \$137 million school bond. Since

its inception, the project has evolved considerably, demonstrating that fiscal responsibility is not simply about adhering to an original plan. It requires continually evaluating costs, priorities, and changing circumstances to ensure the project remains aligned with educational needs, available funding, and our commitments to taxpayers and students.

If overruns occur, NK should evaluate every reasonable option before seeking additional taxpayer funding or making reductions that affect students. This could include modifying or phasing project components, pursuing grants or alternative funding, and identifying savings elsewhere.

Fiscal responsibility requires careful planning, transparency, and a willingness to adjust when circumstances change while protecting taxpayers and minimizing the impact on students and essential educational services.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

If pressed to reduce the annual budget, I would first look for reductions that have the least impact on students, staff, and the quality of education NK provides. That means examining administrative and operational expenses, vendor contracts, planned purchases, and projects that could be delayed or phased before reducing student-facing programs or positions.

We have successfully taken this approach before. When federal ESSER funding expired in 2024, North Kingstown faced the challenge of absorbing programs previously supported by temporary federal dollars while also managing increases in transportation, healthcare, and other costs. Through careful budgeting, we preserved important supports, including interventionists, multilingual learner services, social workers, and late buses, without staffing reductions.

I would continue applying that same approach: find efficiencies, renegotiate

costs where possible, pursue alternative funding, and use data to understand the consequences of proposed reductions.

Some circumstances may require difficult choices, but I would be reluctant to support cuts that create short-term savings at the expense of higher long-term costs. My priority would remain protecting classroom instruction, student supports, and our ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff.

3. How should student voices inform School Committee policy decisions?

Student voice should be an important part of School Committee decision-making because students experience our policies firsthand. We should not only provide opportunities for students to offer feedback but actively seek their perspectives throughout the policymaking process.

During my current term, I have advocated to expand those opportunities. Students and community members now participate on our Policy Advisory Committee, and we have increased opportunities for participation through other advisory groups. We have also worked with the administration to solicit student feedback through surveys, helping us hear from students beyond those who are most comfortable speaking publicly or serving in leadership roles.

I also believe School Committee members need to meet students where they are. I love attending Democracy Day, judging senior project presentations, hearing student representative reports, and having conversations with student organizations because I get the opportunity to hear directly from students about their experiences and priorities.

Student input should not mean that students alone determine policy. The Committee must balance their perspectives with educational research, staff expertise, family input, legal requirements, and available resources. But their voices should meaningfully inform that process.

The best policies are developed with the people they affect, not simply for them. Creating multiple, ongoing avenues for student participation helps us make better-informed decisions and strengthens students' connection to their schools and community.

4. How should the effectiveness of educational technology investments on student learning be evaluated?

Educational technology investments should be evaluated against clear goals established before the investment is made. We should identify what we expect a technology to accomplish, how success will be measured, and when we will review the results. The question should not simply be whether technology is being used, but whether it is improving teaching and learning.

Evaluation should include student achievement data where appropriate, but also usage, engagement, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and feedback from educators and students. Teachers are using these tools every day and can provide critical insight into whether technology enhances instruction or creates additional challenges.

As School Committee Chair, I have encouraged NKSD to undertake this type of review. This fall the administration will examine samples of technology usage and available data and report its findings to the School Committee at the beginning of 2027. That review will help inform future decisions about where our technology investments are providing value and where changes may be warranted.

As chair, I have increasingly emphasized using assessment results, SurveyWorks data, accountability information, and other measures to guide decision-making. Technology should receive the same review.

Technology can be an important educational tool but purchasing it does not automatically make it effective. We have a responsibility to continually evaluate outcomes and ensure taxpayer dollars are supporting tools that meaningfully improve the educational experience.

tee. Members must consider stakeholder input alongside evidence, educational outcomes, legal requirements, fiscal considerations, and the needs of the district as a whole.

The strongest policies result from broad input, careful analysis, and an open decision-making process.

4. How should the effectiveness of educational technology investments on student learning be evaluated?

Educational technology should be evaluated the same way we evaluate any educational investment: by whether it improves student learning and prepares students for success.

Technology is an essential skill in today's world, but it should be used intentionally and in age-appropriate ways. It should enhance teaching and learning, not replace strong instruction, meaningful classroom interaction, critical thinking, or hands-on learning. Students also need digital literacy, online safety skills, and healthy technology habits.

Technology investments should be evaluated using multiple measures, including student achievement, engagement, teacher feedback, classroom observations, instructional efficiency, and equitable access.

As technology evolves, we should be willing to continue what works, adjust what can be improved, and discontinue investments that are not producing meaningful results. The goal should never be technology for technology's sake. The goal is better learning, preparing students for the future, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

5. What are your thoughts on redistricting of students within NKSD schools?

5. What are your thoughts on redistricting of students within NKSD schools?

Redistricting is a significant decision that must be thoughtful, data-driven, and connected to the district's long-term planning. Enrollment and building capacity, transportation, future construction, educational programming, and input from administrators, staff, families, and the community all need to be considered together.

Recognizing how interconnected these issues are, I recommended the establishment of a Redistricting, Transportation & Start Time Advisory Committee to examine attendance zones, transportation efficiency, and school start times as part of a broader strategic process. This fall, administrators, teachers, students, and community members will continue to work alongside an outside consultant to develop recommendations that will be presented to the School Committee.

As a parent of current NK students, I understand firsthand that decisions about attendance zones, transportation, and school schedules affect not only students but entire families. Changing schools can affect children academically, socially, and emotionally. Depending on the circumstances, strategies such as phased implementation, exempting current students from changes, or family choice should be considered to minimize disruption.

We also need to acknowledge current realities. Some NK schools are approaching capacity, and our ongoing school construction and renovation work creates an opportunity and a responsibility to plan thoughtfully for the future.

Doing nothing is not necessarily the least disruptive option if it allows capacity and transportation problems to worsen. Our responsibility is to plan, engage families transparently, and make decisions that strengthen the district while minimizing disruption for students and families.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

What differentiates me is the combination of my professional background in public higher education, doctorate in educational leadership, and School Committee experience, including four years as Chair. I have helped lead NK through significant change: from hiring a permanent superintendent, navigating the expiration of ESSER funding, strengthening governance, and advancing the \$137 million school construction bond.

That experience also gives me a clear understanding of the work still ahead.

My first priority is student access, achievement, and academic excellence. We must improve outcomes while expanding opportunities such as Pre-K, Career and Technical Education, world language, and strong physical and mental health supports.

My second is modernizing systems and improving the student experience. We need thoughtful solutions for attendance zones, start times, transportation, before- and after-school care, and other challenges facing today's families, supported by sustainable funding.

My third is facilities and long-term infrastructure. After successfully advancing the bond and new middle school project, we must deliver those projects responsibly while creating a sustainable plan for our remaining aging facilities while ensuring our buildings are safe for our students and staff.

My record demonstrates that I can help move complex initiatives from discussion to implementation. I want to continue that work while keeping students, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and North Kingstown's long-term success at the center of our decisions.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

Yes



Pamela R. Pinheiro
Independent

1. How would you propose managing cost overrides on major committed projects?

If major committed projects experience significant cost overruns, my approach would be to understand the cause and financial impact, strengthen oversight, and carefully evaluate available options before asking taxpayers to contribute additional funding. Cost increases should be communicated promptly to the School Committee and the public through timely financial reporting, regular budget-to-actual updates, and accessible online project information. We should maximize available reimbursements, pursue grants and other funding opportunities, and carefully evaluate project

alternates.

The new middle school and our Capital Improvement Plan are long-term investments in our students and community. I value the work of the School Building Advisory Committee and believe major decisions should be informed by its recommendations, district administration, financial data, and professional expertise.

At the same time, managing cost overruns should not mean losing sight of the long-term vision. If we are making a once-in-a-generation investment in a new middle school, we should ensure it meets the educational and operational needs of students for decades to come, not simply today's needs.

Decisions should consider student impact, safety, long-term value, and financial sustainability. Strong oversight and clear communication are essential to being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars while ensuring these investments serve students and educators for many years to come.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

If the district needed to reduce the annual budget, I would not begin with predetermined cuts. Budget decisions should be based on district priorities, measurable outcomes, and a clear understanding of how spending affects students.

My first step would be to work with the administration and the Budget & Finance Advisory Committee to identify efficiencies, review budget-to-actual spending throughout the year, and determine whether programs and expenditures are producing their intended results.

Before considering reductions that

directly affect classrooms, I would examine operational efficiencies, administrative costs, legal expenses, outside service contracts, newly created positions, and other expenditures that should be periodically reviewed to ensure they remain necessary and aligned with district priorities. We should also actively pursue grants, reimbursements, and alternative funding sources.

Fiscal responsibility does not simply mean spending less. It means understanding where taxpayer dollars are going, measuring whether those investments are working, and being willing to make difficult decisions when they are not. My priority would be protecting student learning while ensuring every dollar is spent responsibly.

3. How should student voices inform School Committee policy decisions?

Students experience our schools every day, and their voices should be a meaningful part of the School Committee's decision-making process. Their perspectives can identify challenges adults may not see and help us understand how policies actually work in practice.

Good policy should not be developed in isolation or through the perspective of only one group. Our district has taken steps to broaden participation in policy development, something I supported because I believe policies benefit from hearing multiple perspectives. Students should have meaningful opportunities to contribute their experiences alongside parents, educators, administrators, and residents.

I support student representatives, advisory groups, surveys, public comment, and other opportunities to hear directly from students. Ultimately, responsibility for balancing these perspectives and making policy decisions rests with the elected School Commit-

Holly Quinn - no response



Be Sure to Vote on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

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North Kingstown General Election Candidates

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★ ★ ★

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NORTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★



1. How would you propose managing cost overrides on major committed projects?

As a mom of a young family in town, I understand how important it is to protect our tax dollars. Keeping major school district projects on track and on budget requires proactive planning and a commitment to protecting our community's investments. If cost overrides do happen, we need to handle them immediately.

My first step would be to look closely at the budget lines to compare our initial cost estimates directly against actual spending so we can see exactly where the extra expenses are coming from. From there, I would work collaboratively with project managers and contractors to find areas where we can adjust the project scope or trim non-essential costs to absorb the overage. Moving forward, we should look for ways to set flat rates in our contracts so

that sudden price increases don't impact our school budgets, our educators and our students.

Ultimately, the school committee needs to use preventative monitoring and regular project checkpoints to catch any issues early, something I've been pleased to see happening with the project to build our new middle school.

By working closely with the town council and keeping the community fully informed, we can resolve budget imbalances before they grow and ensure our projects are delivered responsibly. Transparency throughout any process helps maintain community trust. Together, we can build a strong, collaborative NKSD, even amidst inevitable challenges.

2. If pressed to reduce the bottom line on the annual budget, what specific cuts would you be willing to vote for and why?

Budget adjustments must always be evaluated through a lens of minimizing negative impacts on student learning and the overall school experience. To protect the classroom, I am committed to keeping student-to-teacher ratios as low as possible, preserving essential student support staff, securing critical instructional materials, and maintaining school building safety. I am also committed to working with the town to ensure that the education budget sufficiently meets the needs of schools.

If pressed to reduce the bottom line, I would look outside the classroom for areas to reduce our overhead. Specifically, I would evaluate opportunities to align or consolidate administrative roles, streamline operational processes, scrutinize external vendor contracts, and responsibly adjust timelines for non-urgent, long-term projects. By reducing our overhead and reviewing vendor performance, we can find cost savings that don't impact our students' day-to-day learning and safety.

Because budget discussions naturally cause anxiety among stakeholders, maintaining community trust

throughout this process is paramount. I will advocate for a transparent financial review that actively includes students, families, educators, and administrators before any final votes are cast. Ultimately, fiscal constraints require us to be disciplined, strategic partners. My goal will always be to collaborate openly across North Kingstown to make thoughtful decisions that protect classroom integrity and keep our schools thriving.

3. How should student voices inform School Committee policy decisions?

Students and their educational experiences must be at the heart of all policy decisions. As a school committee, we should center opportunities to learn from those most impacted by our choices: students and their educators.

While student data and surveys are useful tools for analyzing broad trends, direct student voice is essential to truly understand how policies affect learning, wellbeing, belonging, and academic success. We can actively prioritize student perspectives by inviting students to speak at committee meetings, forming targeted student focus groups, and attending student-centered school events. In my professional background as a director of educator preparation, I regularly surveyed program students, met with students one-on-one and centered their voices in decision making.

Additionally, cultivating student voice should be an integral part of each school's culture and curriculum. This ensures our young people have the opportunity to develop their unique voices, build the skillset to advocate for themselves and others, and practice putting their values into action. As a high school English teacher, voice development was an essential aspect of my students' writing process and is even more vital today in the age of AI. Through daily writing prompts, one-on-one conferences, class presentations and student portfolios, students had the opportunity to hone, use and share their perspectives- all of which made

our classroom community stronger.

Learning from the perspectives of others is an essential leadership trait for students, educators, and school committee members alike. We all make more informed, impactful decisions when we listen to a diversity of voices.

4. How should the effectiveness of educational technology investments on student learning be evaluated?

Evaluating educational technology investments begins with clear goals, thorough educator training, usage guardrails, and robust impact monitoring. All ed-tech decisions must be grounded in research-backed best practices- not educational trends, external contracts, or personal opinions. However, an effectiveness study should never be a one-time measure. It must be an ongoing process of review that adapts as technologies change and research evolves.

To measure true impact, student outcome data from before a tool's introduction should be compared to data collected after. Furthermore, each technology must be evaluated individually rather than lumped together. Surveys are also necessary to understand how the technology affects students, teachers, and support staff, as well as what further training or support may be needed. Because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to screen time and digital learning, diverse student needs and environments must always be factored into the equation.

Additionally, evaluations should look closely at student age and usage minutes, and directly compare tech outcomes against non-tech alternatives. For example, as a teacher, I always had students read physical books and write their first drafts with pencil and paper. There is recent research that shows these "old school" methods result in significantly more brain activity and skill development.

Educational technology can support student learning when implemented with fidelity and regular oversight, but

the priority for students should always be on foundational skill development first. Any educational technology investments should support and supplement instruction, not replace it, which is why an ongoing review process is essential.

5. What are your thoughts on redistricting of students within NKSD schools?

Ideally, redistricting should be as limited as possible to preserve stability for students and families. As a mom of two young kids, I know how beneficial it is to have continuity in my kids' educational experiences. However, as shifts in housing and town demographics impact our school populations, we must ensure student numbers are appropriately aligned with building capacities and staffing ratios- both for today and for future projections. Every child deserves an equitable educational experience, regardless of which neighborhood they live in.

Because redistricting impacts the daily lives of families, the entire process must be transparent. We must establish a clear framework for gathering family input, using community forums, surveys, and public workshops to listen to family concerns before any maps are finalized. Final boundary decisions must heavily weigh sibling placement, neighborhood proximity, bus routes, and student transit times.

Furthermore, boundary lines cannot be looked at in a vacuum. As a committee, we must ensure this process works in tandem with the ongoing review of school start times and transportation efficiencies. By combining a holistic, data-driven approach with authentic community engagement, we can make balanced, sustainable decisions that prioritize student well-being, fiscal responsibility, and community trust.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your top three priorities during your term?

In addition to being a parent of NKSD students, I am also a former K-12 classroom teacher, educator of para-professionals and director of educator preparation. These work experiences, across multiple states and in collaboration with national partners, uniquely differentiate me as a candidate. These distinct perspectives allow me to analyze complex policies through the eyes of the district's most vital stakeholders. I understand the daily realities facing our NK families, the joys and challenges of teaching, the critical needs of our support staff, and the innovative educational approaches happening across our country's schools.

If elected, my top three priorities will be enhancing student and educator wellbeing, deepening literacy and critical thinking, and elevating student voice. For our students, I will advocate for school safety, mental health resources, an environment of belonging and inclusion, and social-emotional learning that supports students' holistic health. For our educators, I will advocate for manageable workloads, low student-to-teacher ratios, and meaningful professional development and training. Cultivating a school culture built on trust and strong relationships is essential to helping students thrive and reducing educator burnout. Additionally, I will support curriculum frameworks that emphasize evidence-based literacy instruction that prepares students to become analytical, lifelong learners. Finally, I will work to integrate student perspectives directly into committee decision-making and cultivate student advocacy and civic engagement.

While my diverse lived experiences will deeply inform my perspective, I am fully committed to ensuring that every vote I cast and every policy I support is thoughtfully grounded in research-backed best practices.

7. Y/N: Do you support less digital technology use in grades K-5?

Yes



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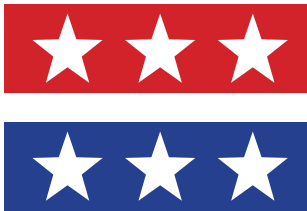
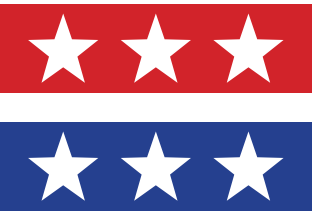
LWV
of South County, Rhode Island

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CHOICE



Be Sure to Vote on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.



Patricia A. Alley
Democrat - Incumbent uncontested

1. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

There is no issue of greater importance than ensuring current and future generations of South Kingstown have a sustainable source of clean water. The Council has directed the town staff and the Town Solicitor to engage with Veolia to get answers regarding the full ban on outdoor water use, as well as the status of wells currently in use. I would like to understand the full extent of the problem with the Green Hill wells and know if remediation is an option and what the cost would be to fix it. I would also like to understand what the cost would be of adding three new wells of similar capacity in an alternate location without the same issues. It is important to remember, this is not just a South Kingstown problem, water is an urgent issue around our state, nation and planet. With this in mind, I would like to explore adding more drought resistant landscaping and less sod to future development in South

Kingstown. I also would like to increase the availability and use of rain barrels in home and municipal landscaping.

2. What specifically will you do to ensure the Town Council and School Committee improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

The Town Manager and the town's finance director are currently working with the Superintendent and the School Department's interim finance director to increase collaboration and communication between the two entities, throughout the year.

3. The school building project will require debt service payments for the next 7+ years. How will you balance these debt obligations with increasing municipal needs, school funding, and property tax pressures

A strong school system is the backbone of any community and the future of our community requires a well-educated populace. Voters approved the construction of the new high school in May of 2024 and with 50% of the total cost reimbursed by the State, now is the

time to do it. South Kingstown has a strong and expanding tax base, as well as an excellent municipal bond rating; that translates into favorable interest rates and terms. The construction of the new high school is on time and on budget and that is good news for taxpayers. The financial state of South Kingstown is strong. One of the biggest challenges we face in South Kingstown is unreimbursed school transportation mandates. This impacts SK taxpayers disproportionately due to the size of our town and the number of schools in our district. We join a chorus of other voices, from the RI Foundation to other municipalities in advocating with our legislators for a revision of the school funding formula. I am hopeful this will yield results during the next legislative session.

4. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to South Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

Our top priority as a council has been the addition of affordable and

workforce housing to our community. The redevelopment of the Colonel David B Champagne Heights will replace 52 existing affordable units and add 33 workforce housing units. Approximately 47 million dollars has been secured for this redevelopment, thanks to the efforts of dedicated Board members and the support from State leaders and our Congressional delegation. The planned redevelopment of the 8 acre South Road School Property offers a once in a generation opportunity to add 40+ homes for working families who are priced out of the market, not just here in SK, but all over the State.

5. The field of candidates for TC is limited this election year. What will you do to encourage more residents to get involved in serving in town government?

"All politics are local"; we have often heard this sentiment, but I think that these words ring true today, more than ever. While we may not have much control over what is happening in DC or in Iran, we DO have control over our own community. There are many Boards and Commissions filled with residents contributing their skills and doing important work on behalf of the

town. The concerns of the town government are practical ones, rather than ethical or philosophical ones. These are our friends and neighbors, not some distant "other". One of my personal initiatives has been the establishment of a non-profit organization called "Sow a Seed South County". A nonpartisan team of dedicated volunteers has come together to establish a 1500 sq foot community garden in the center of town, behind the former Wakefield Elementary School. All of the produce we grow is donated to Jonnycake Food Pantry. This has been a great way for neighbors to get to know each other and build community. Together we can do great things.

6. What will be your top priority during your term?

I want to finish what we have started in terms of adding affordable and workforce housing.

7. Y/N: Do you support additional zoning changes in SK to encourage more building of work force housing?

Yes



Deborah D. Bergner
Democrat - Incumbent uncontested

1. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Protecting our water resources will require a multifaceted approach that goes beyond simply restricting water use. Education will play an important role in increasing public understanding of water usage, reducing waste, and encouraging the adoption of conservation practices such as rain barrels, native plantings, drought-tolerant landscaping, and efficient irrigation systems. Small changes by many households

could have a significant impact on overall water demand. We must also continue investing in water infrastructure to ensure a safe and reliable supply. This includes addressing the challenges facing the wells in Green Hill, which will require a substantial financial commitment. Repairing infrastructure and reactivating the well fields is essential to meeting future demand. We need to investigate and secure outside funding (federal and state) to support these efforts and reduce the burden on local taxpayers. By combining education, conservation, infrastructure improvements, environmental stewardship, and strategic long-term planning, we can help ensure that residents have access to a safe, sustainable, and reliable water supply not only today, but for the next 20 years and beyond.

2. What specifically will you do to ensure the Town Council and School Committee improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

At our budget meetings last spring, I advocated for initiating budget discussions sooner and increasing the frequency of joint meetings. Doing so would create opportunities to identify and resolve challenges early, rather than reacting to them during a crisis. An increased cadence and stronger communication would reduce unnecessary angst and foster greater confidence among our residents (taxpayers, voters and students alike). I support regular financial reviews, shared long-term forecasting, and the development of common goals and priorities for both the Town and School Department. Greater transparency and collaboration will help build trust,

improve decision-making, and provide a clearer understanding of budget pressures on both sides. By creating a more predictable and cooperative process, we can make better use of taxpayer dollars and reduce the annual cycle of conflict and uncertainty.

3. The school building project will require debt service payments for the next 7+ years. How will you balance these debt obligations with increasing municipal needs, school funding, and property tax pressures?

Balancing the twenty year debt service associated with the new high school, municipal needs, and school funding will require careful long-term planning, thoughtful prioritization, and a commitment to finding efficiencies wherever possible. Residents are already facing increasing housing, utility, and everyday living expenses, and we must be mindful of the cumulative impact of property tax increases. It is too easy to pass rising costs directly on to taxpayers.We need the Town Council to approach spending with the same level of care that many families apply to their household budgets. This means spending efficiently, planning purchases thoughtfully, delaying nonessential expenditures when necessary, and focusing resources on essential needs rather than discretionary wants. The Town Council is entrusted to spend your taxpayer dollars wisely. We owe residents excellent schools, quality municipal services, and sound financial stewardship. My goal is to meet our obligations while keeping South Kingstown affordable for families, seniors, and working residents who call our community home.

4. What measures do you feel

should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to South Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

One of the biggest challenges facing South Kingstown (and the entire country) is the rising cost of housing. We need to expand housing options that are attainable for residents of all ages, at a variety of income levels. The Town Council is currently exploring how best to repurpose three town-owned properties, the former South Road School, Wakefield School, and the Oliver Watson Home, to increase the supply of affordable and workforce housing. These projects have the potential to provide housing opportunities for residents of all ages while making productive use of existing town assets. In addition to creating more housing, I support policies that encourage appropriately scaled development, streamline permitting where possible, and work collaboratively with nonprofit partners to expand housing choices. Housing affordability is not only a quality-of-life issue, it is essential to our economic vitality. Local businesses, schools, healthcare providers, and public safety agencies all depend on being able to attract and retain employees who can afford to live in the community they serve. My goal is to pursue realistic housing solutions that preserve South Kingstown's character while ensuring that we provide opportunity to live and thrive here.

5. The field of candidates for TC is limited this election year. What will you do to encourage more residents to get

involved in serving in town government?

A healthy local community depends on residents who are willing to get involved and share their perspectives. To encourage more people to participate, we must create an environment where residents feel welcomed, respected, and comfortable expressing their views, even when those views differ from others. I believe people are more likely to engage when they know they will be heard. Town officials need to listen to all voices, not just the majority or loudest. Residents should feel free to speak at meetings, ask questions, offer ideas, and express concerns without feeling dismissed or intimidated. Encouraging respectful discussion and recognizing that differing opinions will strengthen decision-making are essential to building public trust. I support efforts to increase awareness of opportunities to serve on boards, commissions, and committees, which are often the first step toward greater civic involvement. We need to actively reach out to residents from different backgrounds, professions, neighborhoods, and age groups to ensure a broader range of perspectives is represented. Good ideas can come from anyone. By fostering a culture of respect, openness, and collaboration, we can encourage more residents to become involved in town government and help shape the future of South Kingstown.

6. What will be your top priority during your term?

As a lifelong Rhode Islander and a South Kingstown resident since 1997, I care deeply about preserving the

community that my husband, CJ, and I chose to call home. We raised our three children, Casey, Hailey, and Michael, all graduates of South Kingstown High School. My top priority is ensuring that South Kingstown is an affordable and welcoming community for residents of all ages.I strongly believe that we must be responsible stewards of our residents' hard-earned tax dollars. Many residents have shared concerns about rising taxes, household expenses, and their ability to remain in the town they love. These challenges affect young adults, working families, seniors, and local workers alike. I will continue to advocate for pragmatic long-term planning, budgeting, and spending to ensure our residents' funds are used wisely. I feel that my degrees in Urban Studies from Brown University, master's in Counseling from Springfield College, and Master of Social Work from Rhode Island College have shaped the knowledge and perspective I have brought to the Town Council since being elected in 2020. During my service on the Council, I am guided by the importance of listening to residents, asking thoughtful questions, and working collaboratively to address community challenges. I will continue to advocate for practical solutions that strengthen our community, protect residents, and preserve the qualities that make South Kingstown such a special place to call home. I invite residents to reach out to me. Deborah D. Bergner, 401-515-5771 debbergner@gmail.com

7. Y/N: Do you support additional zoning changes in SK to encourage more building of work force housing?

Yes



Michael K. Marran
Democrat - Incumbent uncontested

1. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

Some of our recent water issues are a consequence of climate change, and they will become more intense in the years to come. Hotter springs and summers are already "baking" the landscape, making it less able to absorb rainfall when we get it. Our rainstorms are also generally less frequent and are more likely to be strong downpours in a few hours; the land cannot absorb that much water quickly, and what is absorbed is not always sufficient to replenish groundwater aquifers. We need to identify new sources of clean water (supply) AND reduce usage (demand), such as using better landscaping tech-

niques to reduce lawn watering. We must commit to this, as a community, to guarantee ample water for drinking, fire suppression and agriculture.

2. What specifically will you do to ensure the Town Council and School Committee improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

The school department budget is the main driver of the town budget, with over 70% of every tax dollar going there. The council and the school committee have been collaborative for years in the budget process, with many meetings, separately and together, from December through April. Outside revenue sources, both state and federal aid for education, are becoming less reliable, adding pressure to the process. In addition, inflation has been the main culprit

in unavoidably increasing expenses. Starting the budget process earlier than required by the town charter, and getting better financial data sooner, should reduce tensions.

3. The school building project will require debt service payments for the next 7+ years. How will you balance these debt obligations with increasing municipal needs, school funding, and property tax pressures?

The voters wisely committed to replacing our 72 year old, technologically outdated high school building. We are currently on schedule and projected to come in under the \$150 million budget. We are also on track to get reimbursed over \$50 million of those costs by the state. Managing the debt will have to include careful use of town reserves, limiting new expenses, phased in tax

increases, and expanding the town's tax base.

4. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to South Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

The council has prioritized affordable housing in its work for several years period we are in the process of converting surplus town properties for housing, incentivizing the building of accessory dwelling units (ADU's), and working towards a multi-use zoning ordinance that would allow businesses in certain areas to add housing units over commercial properties.

5. The field of candidates for TC is

limited this election year. What will you do to encourage more residents to get involved in serving in town government?

There are opportunities for residents to serve on a number of town council advisory committees and school committee subcommittees (please check the town website for a list of the advisory committees!).

6. What will be your top priority during your term?

Housing.

7. Y/N: Do you support additional zoning changes in SK to encourage more building of work force housing?

Yes



Rory H. McEntee
Democrat - Incumbent uncontested

1. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

The irrigation ordinance the Town Council enacted is a starting point. It is effective from Memorial Day through Labor Day and includes an odd/even-day restriction system. Since its enactment, it has been successful at curbing water usage during the busiest season in town. But we also need to continue working with the water company, Veolia, to identify private wells that could be acquired to increase our water supply. The town currently owns wells in Green Hill that are contaminated and require substantial investment to treat the water before it can be added to our supply. The Town Council needs to continue being creative in its efforts to curb water usage and increase supply. We also need to carefully review infrastructure investments and engage with the State to find opportunities that can help ease recurring water issues in town and ensure that our water needs are met both today and 20 years from now.

2. What specifically will you do to ensure the Town Council and School Committee improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis

cycles?

The Town Council and School Committee have a desire to work together earlier in the budget process. The more information each body has earlier in the process, the more we can ease the surprises that tend to come up later in the budget cycle. This Town Council has maintained a good professional working relationship with the School Committee, and I only see that continuing into the next term. I would continue to encourage early communication, transparency, and collaboration between the two bodies so that both can better understand the needs and challenges each faces before the budget is finalized.

3. The school building project will require debt service payments for the next 7+ years. How will you balance these debt obligations with increasing municipal needs, school funding, and property tax pressures?

It is important to first note that the town will receive reimbursements from the State for approximately 50% of the project's debt service costs. This incentive presented a great opportunity for the town to take advantage of and substantially reduces the project's overall costs. To balance the debt service costs related to the new high school

project with the regular and increasing needs of the town and schools, the town must continue its efforts to expand the tax base. We have seen natural tax base growth in the town through development, and we expect more in the future. The Town Council is also considering a zoning change on Old Tower Hill Road that would allow for expanded commercial activity and mixed-use development, including commercial and housing opportunities. The Town Council needs to continue exploring ways it can assist with expanding the tax base so that the town does not have to rely solely on increasing property taxes on residents.

4. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to South Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

The Town Council is currently working through options for the reuse of its vacant town buildings, including South Road School, Wakefield School, and Oliver Watson. We have already looked at what potential housing developments could look like at these parcels. Although we have not made a final decision on what the reuse of each property will be, we know we want some of these properties to become housing

developments to help address the issue of high-cost housing. We are also working through an ordinance that would allow for mixed-use housing on Old Tower Hill Road. If enacted, it would allow commercial businesses to build out more of their property while also adding housing. The town also has an affordable housing fund, and the Town Council has approved disbursements to nonprofits like the Johnnycake Center, which have been used to assist with the development of affordable housing. The Town Council will continue to replenish and maintain the affordable housing fund so it is ready to provide assistance toward the development of lower-cost housing.

5. The field of candidates for TC is limited this election year. What will you do to encourage more residents to get involved in serving in town government?

I encourage residents to attend Town Council meetings and town events throughout South Kingstown. The Town Council has made great investments in the town, including the new EMS station in Perryville, Old Mountain Field, the Community Learning Center at the Peace Dale Library, and Saugatucket Park. When getting involved in town government, it is always helpful to stay in tune with what is happening in town and the discussions that go into

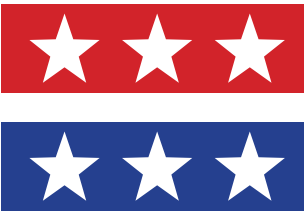
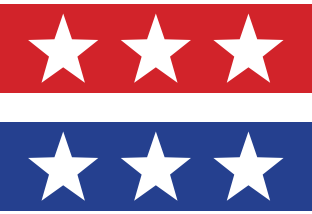
the decisions being made. I would also encourage residents who have an interest in serving to start by joining a town board or commission. That involvement is an important first step toward serving on the Town Council, School Committee, or another town body.

6. What will be your top priority during your term?

I have a few priorities. One is over-seeing the new high school project to ensure it is built on budget and on time. So far, we have been successful, but we have to see this through to completion. It is also important that the Town Council continue to allow residents to maintain their quality of life without facing burdensome increases in taxes. South Kingstown is a strong financial town, and the Town Council has consistently enacted budgets that are lean while also providing the services needed by residents. The Town Council also needs to continue pursuing efforts to broaden the tax base, increase affordable housing, and make great investments in our community. These will all be priorities for me during the next term.

7. Y/N: Do you support additional zoning changes in SK to encourage more building of work force housing?

Yes



Jay G. Wegimont
Democrat - Incumbent uncontested

1. Residents are concerned about the water supply, quality and usage. What ideas do you have, beyond mandates restricting water usage, to protect this valuable resource and ensure our needs are met today and 20 years from now?

The outdoor water ban this summer made one thing very clear: South Kingstown needs better information, stronger planning and greater accountability from Veolia. The ban was imposed before the Town Council had been fully briefed, even though residents and businesses were immediately affected. We should receive regular reports on well levels, demand, system capacity and long-term projections so decisions are based on facts and communicated before a crisis.

I supported the Town Council's resolution opposing Veolia's proposed rate increase because residents should not be asked to pay substantially more without clear justification and reliable

service. I also supported beginning the process of prohibiting large-scale data centers in South Kingstown. We should not invite water-intensive development while our existing supply is under pressure.

I am also deeply concerned about our dependence on Veolia. South Kingstown's water comes from local wells, yet it is managed through a multinational, for-profit corporation. I do not believe that arrangement is sustainable or in the long-term public interest. We need to begin working now on a cost-effective path toward greater public control and accountability.

Going forward, I will push for a better long-term agreement with Veolia, closer coordination among the Town, water suppliers and the state, and serious evaluation of additional supply and infrastructure options. Conservation will remain important, especially during droughts, but restrictions alone are not a twenty-year plan. We need transparent data, protection of our groundwater and responsible decisions about growth so South Kingstown has a dependable water supply for decades to come.

2. What specifically will you do to ensure the Town Council and School Committee improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

I have been crystal clear that the Town Council and School Committee must begin budget discussions earlier and meet more frequently. Waiting until the spring, when both sides are facing deadlines and difficult decisions, creates an unnecessary crisis every year.

I will push for joint public budget meetings to begin in the late summer or early fall and continue regularly throughout the budget process. Both elected bodies should be at the table, along with the Town Manager, Superintendent and financial staff, using the same information about enrollment, staffing, contracts, state aid, transpor-

tation, debt and projected revenue. The schedule for those meetings should be established well before either side adopts a budget request.

The Council provided an additional \$2.1 million for our schools this year. I also opposed eliminating middle school and junior varsity athletics and cutting music opportunities without first receiving a full accounting of central-office spending, staffing trends and program costs. Those questions should be addressed months earlier, not during the final days of the budget process.

Earlier and more frequent discussions will not eliminate every disagreement, but they will give both bodies time to identify problems, agree on priorities and find solutions before students, employees and taxpayers are confronted with another last-minute crisis.

3. The school building project will require debt service payments for the next 7+ years. How will you balance these debt obligations with increasing municipal needs, school funding, and property tax pressures?

The voters approved the new South Kingstown High School, and this Council's responsibility is to deliver the school we promised while protecting taxpayers. In January, the Council approved a final construction contract of approximately \$114.3 million, about \$2 million below the projected construction cost. The project remains on schedule and within budget.

I will continue insisting on close oversight through the School Building Committee, the project task force and the Town Council. Change orders, contingencies and major financial decisions must be reviewed carefully and publicly. We also have to protect every dollar of state reimbursement available through RIDE because losing reimbursement would shift an unnecessary burden onto local taxpayers.

At the same time, the debt cannot become an excuse to neglect our exist-

ing schools, public safety, roads, water infrastructure or other essential services. We need to plan capital projects over several years, delay lower-priority spending when necessary and avoid taking on unnecessary new debt.

My approach is straightforward: finish the high school on time and within budget, maximize state reimbursement, protect classroom funding and essential Town services, and be honest with residents about the long-term tax impact of every major decision.

4. What measures do you feel should be taken to encourage young professionals and working families to remain in or move to South Kingstown given current housing costs and limited affordable options?

South Kingstown must create more year-round housing that young professionals, working families and older residents can actually afford. The Council has already made workforce housing and affordability central goals, and now we need to follow through.

I support responsibly repurposing the former South Road School, former Wakefield Elementary School and Oliver Watson House for workforce housing, with public input and strong Town oversight. I also support appropriate mixed-use redevelopment that adds housing near existing businesses and infrastructure instead of encouraging unchecked sprawl.

I have advocated for a homestead exemption that benefits full-time residents of owner-occupied homes. The rental registry gives the Town better information about our housing market and should help us design a fair exemption. We also voted to expand the Senior Exemptions for our at risk seniors. I have also asked the Town to examine rules affecting condominium and homeowners associations so residents are not prevented from offering legitimate long-term rentals by arbitrary caps or annual approval requirements.

The goal is not development for its

own sake. We need housing for teachers, nurses, first responders, municipal employees, young families and the people who keep our local economy running. New housing must be planned responsibly, protect our water and village character, and contribute fairly to the infrastructure and services it uses.

5. The field of candidates for Town Council is limited this election year. What will you do to encourage more residents to get involved in serving in town government?

The best way to encourage residents to serve is to show them that participation matters. This year, residents spoke clearly about Flock surveillance cameras. The Council listened and voted unanimously to terminate the contract. Residents also raised concerns about large-scale data centers, and the Council voted unanimously to begin the process of prohibiting them. When people see that their voices can change policy, they are more likely to become involved.

I proposed creating a Youth Advisory Board so high school students could learn about local government and bring their perspective directly to Town leaders. Although the proposal did not advance, I still believe in it and will bring it forward again.

I have also held Coffee and Conversation gatherings every month at a local SK small business because residents should be able to speak with their Council members outside formal meetings. I will continue making myself accessible, encouraging people to attend or watch meetings, and promoting vacancies on Town boards and commissions. I also wrote a monthly newsletter on my website jaywegimont.com.

We should work with our schools, URI, libraries, neighborhood organizations and community groups to reach residents who may never have considered serving. Town government is stronger when participation extends beyond the same familiar group of

people and includes younger residents, working families and people from every part of South Kingstown.

6. What will be your top priority during your term?

My top priority will be making South Kingstown more affordable for the people who live here year-round. Young adults are struggling to remain in the community where they grew up working families are being squeezed by housing and property-tax costs, and older residents are worried about whether they can afford to stay in their homes.

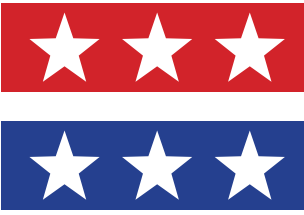
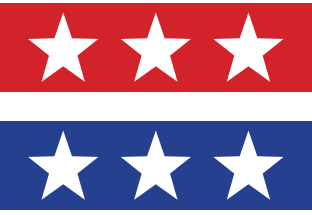
I will continue working toward a meaningful homestead exemption for full-time residents of owner-occupied homes. I will also push forward the Town's workforce-housing plans for surplus municipal properties, support responsible mixed-use development and use the rental registry to make better decisions about our housing market.

Affordability also requires disciplined budgeting. We must finish the new high school on time and within budget, protect state reimbursement, begin school-budget discussions earlier, preserve essential Town services and avoid placing unnecessary costs on taxpayers. We also need to oppose unreasonable water-rate increases and make sure new development contributes fairly to the infrastructure it uses.

South Kingstown should not become a community where only wealthy seasonal property owners can afford to live. My priority is protecting the year-round residents who make this Town a community and ensuring that young people, working families and older residents can continue to call South Kingstown home.

7. Do you support additional zoning changes in South Kingstown to encourage more building of workforce housing?

Yes



Jack Lawrence Cadman
Democrat

1. What will you do to address the rising costs of school transportation?

South Kingstown is the third-largest municipality in Rhode Island. Transportation for students is an essential service which incurs a significant cost, regardless of any other factors. The state's educational aid funding formula does not take transportation costs into consideration. As a member of the School Committee, I will work with the General Assembly and the Rhode Island Department of Education to change this.

2. If elected, what actions will you take to address declining enrollment while costs continue to rise?

When elected, I will work to ensure students know the programs our school district offers that set us apart from other districts in the region so they can make an informed decision about their education. I will work to guarantee those programs are supported. Recent

enrollment statistics suggest that the construction of the new high school is already having a positive impact on enrollment. Programs such as the CTE courses offered by the high school will attract students who want hands-on education with practical value in the real world. Supporting our arts and music programs will also keep students in the district because we have the best to offer to support their passions. The new, state-of-the-art high school which will open in September 2027 will give our community an edge in keeping and attracting new students.

3. What specifically will you do to ensure the School Committee and Town Council improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

The Town Council and the School Committee already work closely to develop the budget. There is a joint meeting between the two bodies when the superintendent submits the school capital improvement plan to the town

manager, another joint meeting before the School Committee submits its budget proposal to the Town

Council, and several more joint meetings after the budget proposal is submitted. The budget will be a contentious issue no matter what, there is never enough money to go around especially in a large municipality like South Kingstown. However crises can be reduced by increasing dialogue between the Town Council and the School Committee. If the deadlines start approaching without an agreement being reached, the two bodies can hold more joint meetings to find a solution without hitting a crisis level.

4. How have charter schools impacted the public school system? Please explain.

Charter schools have impacted the public school system financially because when a student leaves public school for a charter school, the school district must give the charter school the funding that the state would otherwise

provide to the public schools toward the cost of educating the student. There are two charter schools operating in South Kingstown, more than any other suburban community which drains additional money from the public school district.

5. What long-term strategy do you recommend for managing aging school facilities while the new high school consumes significant capital attention?

The best long-term strategy to manage aging school facilities is to focus capital improvements on systems integral to the safety and security of the building. If improvements to facilities can be postponed without having a major impact on the ability of students and teachers to learn and work in that environment, it should be considered. In the last several years, the School Committee has also used redistricting to prioritize facilities, given the past decline in enrollment, and closed two older buildings that would have required significant expenditures to keep

them open.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your priority during your term?

I have recent firsthand experience with South Kingstown's public schools. I graduated from South Kingstown High School in 2024 and have remained involved in the new high school construction project ever since. When elected, my priority will be to ensure the new high school continues to be built on budget and on schedule, and I will work with our Town Council and General Assembly to obtain more funding for our schools. I want to make sure that future students in South Kingstown's schools receive the same high-quality education that I was fortunate enough to receive.

7. Y/N: Do you support strengthening civic education programs in your school district?

Yes



Jennifer Krueger
Democrat

1. What will you do to address the rising costs of school transportation?

With estimated costs of roughly \$6 million in FY27 (nine percent of the overall budget), school transportation expenses require frequent monitoring by the school committee to identify potential savings. However, due to South Kingstown's large geographic area and recently implemented efficiencies, it is fair to expect that any new plans would offer marginal rather than substantial savings.

Recently proposed changes to the state funding formula could provide additional savings if eventually passed. If elected, I will advocate for a new state funding formula through regular communication with our state-level partners.

In the more immediate term, I support the 2026 Transpar audit recommendations to improve routes, better

coordinate bell times, and review transportation policies. I do not support, nor do we have sufficient community backing, to pursue consolidated neighborhood hub stops at this time. However, because this change could have a dramatic impact on transportation costs, it would be prudent to review the option again in the future and reassess the potential impacts and tradeoffs.

Finally, I agree with the district's effort to make its next transportation contract more competitive. Proposed changes to the next transportation RFP would remove requirements such as a propane-only fleet, an in-town bus depot for the fleet, and a \$1 million performance bond, all of which could limit the number of qualified bidders. Broadening the pool of potential transportation providers should incentivize more competitive pricing while maintaining safety and service standards.

2. If elected, what actions will you take to address declining enrollment while costs continue to rise?

South Kingstown School District has eliminated 57 staff positions in the last three years and consolidated its elementary and middle schools in response to declining enrollment. However, declining pupil enrollment does not necessarily mean a parallel reduction in school expenses. The district has buildings to maintain, buses to operate, and contractual obligations to meet. Many school-related costs have risen faster than the overall inflation rate, especially healthcare, transportation and construction/repair costs. I appreciate the complexity of this issue and recognize that as a School Committee member, stewardship of taxpayer dollars will always be a key responsibility.

Enrollment trends must prompt the School Committee to look carefully at whether staffing and other resources are organized in the best and most efficient ways to meet the needs of the students currently in the schools.

Are students getting the right support, and early enough? Are specialists, classroom teachers, and instructional coaches being used where their expertise has the greatest impact?

This also connects to my interest in early screening and intervention. Identifying learning needs sooner in a child's education journey can improve outcomes and help avoid more intensive and expensive interventions later. In sum, I would approach declining enrollment as an opportunity to examine how the entire district ecosystem works, not simply as an instruction to cut positions.

3. What specifically will you do to ensure the School Committee and Town Council improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

I believe both the Town Council and the School Committee recognized during this year's budget discussions that a more collaborative process needs to begin earlier. Before either body focuses on individual revenue and expense line items, they should have a shared understanding of the conditions driving the school budget.

If elected, I will advocate for earlier joint work sessions between the School Committee and Town Council focused on the major factors shaping the coming budget: enrollment trends, staffing levels, contractual obligations, special education needs, transportation, facilities, and other significant cost drivers. That shared context should be established before the conversation turns primarily to the size of the appropriation or specific reductions.

The school budget is part of the Town's overall budget, but it is also the largest and most complex use of local taxpayer funds. A productive process therefore requires both bodies to invest the time needed to understand the assumptions and operational decisions behind the budget spreadsheet.

My goal would be to replace the

annual "crisis cycle" with a process built around earlier, more robust communication and good-faith problem solving. The School Committee and Town Council will not always agree on the goals or the fiscal needs, but disagreements should occur after both bodies have developed a common understanding of the facts and the choices facing the district.

4. How have charter schools impacted the public school system? Please explain.

In South Kingstown, having two charter schools in close proximity creates greater competition for prospective students than in other cities and towns. More than \$3 million in state and local education aid will leave the district with the 134 SK students choosing charter schools rather than district schools in FY 27.

I am a lifelong, steadfast supporter of public education and believe in its mission to provide high-quality learning and opportunity to all children. However, there are situations where a child is not thriving in a specific learning environment despite everyone's best efforts. In those cases, having a charter alternative that is available to students regardless of their ability to pay (as opposed to tuition-based private school alternatives) helps some students stay engaged with learning and be more successful in a public school setting. Many South Kingstown charter school students do return to the district in later grades, and we should make every effort to strengthen that trend.

As a school committee member, my focus would be on making the South Kingstown School District the best option for the vast majority of students at all grade levels. The Committee cannot control the existence of charter schools in our town. However, it can drive the district's policies to create an exceptional educational environment that is highly desirable to a greater number of students. Routine educa-

tional assessments, Survey Works data, and the recent Equity Audit all make recommendations that, if implemented, would certainly move the district in this direction.

5. What long-term strategy do you recommend for managing aging school facilities while the new high school consumes significant capital attention?

South Kingstown needs a long-term capital improvement plan that anticipates the needs of every school building and prioritizes timely maintenance that can prevent significantly greater capital repairs in the future. This would include a multi-year schedule for major systems and repairs, plus careful planning to take advantage of the 35 percent reimbursement that is available for many projects.

Preventive maintenance should be seen primarily as an investment. Delaying routine work may provide short-term budget relief, but chronic deferred maintenance can turn manageable repairs into much more expensive capital projects. The School Committee should receive regular information about building conditions, upcoming maintenance needs, estimated costs, and potential reimbursement so these decisions can be made before they become emergencies.

For the same reason, I am concerned about using capital funds to support annual operating expenses. That may help close a budget gap for one year, but it reduces the resources available for known long-term needs and does not address the underlying operating budget.

The new high school deserves significant attention, but it cannot become our entire facilities strategy. The district, with the support of town management, should treat maintenance as an ongoing responsibility, not something to address only when a problem becomes urgent.

6. What differentiates you as a can-



South Kingstown General Election Candidates

SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE



Katherine M. Macinanti
Independent - Incumbent

1. What will you do to address the rising costs of school transportation?

The biggest driver of our district's student transportation costs is that transportation is not included in the state education funding formula. South Kingstown has the largest drivable area in the state, which results in the largest transportation budget line item. Over the years, through the Transportation Subcommittee, we have revisited, revised, and refined our bus routes and policies, and we will continue working with our Transportation Director to do so. However, the only way to make a meaningful fiscal impact on our transportation budget is to continue advocating at the State House for student transportation to be included in the state funding formula.

2. If elected, what actions will you take to address declining enrollment while costs continue to rise?

After the decline in birth rates across

the state, the next biggest cost driver associated with declining enrollment is the number of students who enroll in charter schools and neighboring public schools through CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs. The more care and investment we put into our district's educational programs and school facilities, the more capacity we have to encourage students to stay in our schools. Over the past two years, we have seen improvements in both areas. Working with my fellow School Committee members, as well as our instructional leaders and educators on our School Improvement Team's goals and outcomes will be key to continuing this progress and encouraging more of our community's children to stay in our community schools.

3. What specifically will you do to ensure the School Committee and Town Council improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

As a sitting member on the current school committee, as well as the chair of our Budget and Finance Subcommittee, I have already demanded early and frequent discussions and collaboration between our School Superintendent & Finance Department and the Town Manager & Finance Director. Myself - alongside our current sitting School Committee members, have requested earlier and more frequent collaborative Budget specific meetings with our Town Council so that the process can be more thoughtfully and strategically worked through. Upon re-election - I would continue to press for this to be the norm, so that adequate planning and funding can take place over time.

4. How have charter schools impacted the public school system? Please explain.

The biggest impact that charter schools have on our public school system is ultimately the Per Pupil Costs. While our students are educated in Charter Schools - the budget line item

still comes to the District's Budget. Every SK student that is being educated in a Charter School, rather than a district school impacts the rising cost to educate all our students.

5. What long-term strategy do you recommend for managing aging school facilities while the new high school consumes significant capital attention?

We have an ongoing, long-term strategy that we have set the foundation for investing in our aging school facilities. Upon re-election, I will continue to advocate and work closely with the Town to ensure updates and upgrades to our School Facilities takes priority over the next 5-10+ year Capital Improvement Plans projected out over time. Part of this plan is ensuring that the Housing Aid Reimbursement monies that comes back to the Town from the State for those projects get earmarked in a School Facilities Capital Improvement Account that can be used solely for our Schools Facilities Projects.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your priority during your term?

As a current School Committee Member - I have 9 years of experience sitting at the table, as well as 50+ years living in our community. I was educated in our school system. I walked the halls and experienced the teaching and learning first hand, as well as currently playing an integral part in the current New SKHS Building & Curtis Corner Athletic Facilities projects. My main priority is always: ensuring the continued progress of the educational programs available to all our community children, with a close second of seeing the current Facilities Projects to completion on time, and on budget during this next term.

7. Y/N: Do you support strengthening civic education programs in your school district?

Yes



James L. Restivo
Democrat - Incumbent

1. What will you do to address the rising costs of school transportation?

There are a couple of ways to address this. From a local perspective, we'll keep working with our local transportation company to find ways to reduce the number of necessary busses to help control costs, while ensuring every student who needs a ride gets one. We have already combined bus routes between middle school and high school which has reduced cost. I plan to review our transportation contract as it comes up for renewal and look for ways to negotiate costs down. Further cost reductions will need to be addressed by the State Legislature by supporting the Blue Ribbon Foundation's recommendations to include transportation costs in the funding formula. Frankly, the burden of transportation is high for South Kingstown due to our size, which is a unique burden for us and few other districts, so getting funding from the state for transportation will allow us to spend those funds on education rather than transportation.

2. If elected, what actions will you take to address declining enrollment while costs continue to rise?

The best way to fix declining enrollment is to have a strong school community with a highly-rated educational environment to entice students to choose our district. That is what we can control, and what we have proven capable of doing. But let's be honest, having a marketing and advertising budget where we can show off our excellent CTE programs is vitally important as well. While we are in a situation where we have multiple schools competing for a declining student pool, this is necessary for us to stay top of mind for students in our region. Overall, the challenge is that enrollment is declining statewide. Rhode Island and South Kingstown will have to do more to address rising housing prices and cost of living overall. I look forward to working with my colleagues at the state house to address these issues from a broader perspective.

3. What specifically will you do to ensure the School Committee and Town Council improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

Communication is key. One of the key breakdowns in this past budget

cycle was a misunderstanding of the district's needs. As a committee, we plan to meet with the Town Council earlier and more often, starting this fall. This will allow us to address questions from Council Members and have time to prepare answers for questions before we run up against budget deadlines. As Vice Chair, I'll continue to advocate for and support additional joint meetings with the Town Council that aren't required by the Town Charter.

4. How have charter schools impacted the public school system? Please explain.

Charter schools offer an alternative to South Kingstown's schools. However, the challenge for the school district is that taxpayer money follows the student, which diverts resources for the SKSD community. This issue is two-fold. The cost to our district goes up for every student choosing a charter school. However, the costs for other fixed services does not go down, creating a negative feedback cycle for our district's budget. I support school choice and have no issue with parents and students who choose charter schools if they feel that it is the right choice for them. However, I do take

issue with the funding formula and funding process for town-led public schools as the way it works now is not the most beneficial for all of South Kingstown's learners.

5. What long-term strategy do you recommend for managing aging school facilities while the new high school consumes significant capital attention?

We have worked with the Town Council to set up a reserve account to capture housing aid reimbursements from RIDE. The way this works is that when we complete a capital project that is reimbursable, those funds go into the reserve account and can be reused for additional capital projects. This allows us to keep using those funds while reducing the burden to both the School District's budget and the Town Tax Transfer. If I am elected again, I will advocate for spending as much on capital as is reasonably possible so that we can address the needs of our facilities. In the past, I feel like we have not taken on as many projects as we could have and look forward to changing this as we move forward with the new high school.

6. What differentiates you as a candi-

date and if elected, what will be your priority during your term?

Having had time on the committee over the last four years, I have learned a great deal about how budgets work and what School Committees can or can't do by law. My executive leadership from the private sector has informed me on how there are different ways to approach challenges. It's taught me how to work effectively with people with differing views. I am a systems thinker and bring the mindset of an operational leader to the committee. I plan to apply this mindset to one of my top priorities for the next four years, which will be to continue to address the findings of the equity audit. We have a lot of work to do to address gaps in learning and the overall educational experience found in some demographic groups. And the solutions will require consistent engagement and conversations with underserved members of our community.

7. Y/N: Do you support strengthening civic education programs in your school district?

Yes



Carol A. Vetter
Democrat - Incumbent

the state funding formula, so the local school budget must absorb the full expense.

I, along with other School Committee members, am meeting with the Governor's representatives to address this issue directly and explore whether transportation costs can be incorporated into future state funding formula allocations. The School Committee also recently conducted a transportation audit to identify potential efficiencies and cost savings. The good news is that our bus routes are already operating very efficiently; however, the audit did not identify any significant opportunities for further cost reductions.

2. If elected, what actions will you take to address declining enrollment while costs continue to rise?

There are many causes of declining enrollment, including fewer children being born in the district and the high cost of living in town, which makes it difficult for young families to afford to live here. This makes declining enrollment particularly challenging to address. Steps we are taking include actively marketing our CTE programs to students in other districts, continuing to support our renowned music, theatre, and arts programs, and completing our new high school building, which is already showing signs of helping us retain high school students

in our district.

Since I began serving on the School Committee in 2021, we have taken significant steps to contain costs in response to declining enrollment, including closing Wakefield Elementary School and Curtis Corner Middle School. We continue to reduce costs through efficient class scheduling and staff reductions. I am committed to finding additional efficiencies and reducing costs while maintaining the quality of our school programs.

3. What specifically will you do to ensure the School Committee and Town Council improve their collaborative budget process to reduce annual crisis cycles?

I will continue to advocate for meetings between the School Committee and Town Council earlier in the budget process to promote transparency and partnership. Sharing financial information early is essential so that areas of concern can be identified and addressed together, rather than becoming more difficult issues later in the process.

Having an MBA in Finance and Accounting, I bring a strong financial background and the skill set needed to analyze budgets, evaluate costs, and help identify responsible ways to manage our resources. I will use that experience to help strengthen the bud-

get process, improve communication between the two bodies, and address difficult financial decisions throughout the year rather than allowing them to become last-minute challenges.

4. How have charter schools impacted the public school system? Please explain.

We need to recognize the financial impact that charter schools have on our public school system. When students enroll in charter schools, a portion of the funding that would otherwise support our public schools follows those students, while many of the district's fixed costs remain. This leaves fewer resources available to maintain programs and services, which is particularly challenging as we face declining enrollment and rising costs in other areas.

Another concern is the impact on enrollment stability. When students leave for charter schools, district enrollment becomes more difficult to predict, making it harder to plan effectively for staffing, course offerings, class sizes, and facility use.

5. What long-term strategy do you recommend for managing aging school facilities while the new high school consumes significant capital attention?

As part of the Stage One application

to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for the new high school, a comprehensive assessment of all of our school buildings was completed. This provides us with a detailed picture of the long-term needs of our facilities. We are also developing a five-year capital improvement plan that will be submitted to RIDE, outlining our priorities and planned maintenance over that period. Committing to a consistent schedule of preventive maintenance will be essential to preserving our buildings and addressing issues before they become more costly.

In the past, we have funded capital improvements through the use of fund balance. Going forward, we have an opportunity to leverage RIDE reimbursements from current projects, such as the repaving project at West Kingston Elementary School, to help fund future capital improvements. I will work with the Town Council to establish a dedicated reserve fund specifically for this purpose, allowing us to reinvest these funds in the ongoing maintenance and improvement of our school buildings.

6. What differentiates you as a candidate and if elected, what will be your priority during your term?

What differentiates me as a candidate is the combination of my experience on the School Committee and my financial and leadership background. I

have served on the School Committee for five years, including two years as Chair, giving me a strong understanding of our schools, our community, and the responsibilities of the committee. My MBA in finance and accounting, along with extensive experience with budgeting and cost containment, allows me to bring a strong financial perspective to the decisions facing the district.

I also led the search committee that hired our new superintendent, which gave me valuable experience in evaluating leadership, building consensus, and making an important long-term decision for our school district.

If elected, my priority will be to ensure that we maintain a strong school system while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. We need to address declining enrollment, aging facilities, and rising costs while protecting the programs and opportunities that matter most to our students. I want to continue working collaboratively with the superintendent, School Committee, staff, families, and community to make thoughtful, financially responsible decisions that position our schools for long-term success.

7. Y/N: Do you support strengthening civic education programs in your school district?

Yes

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VOTE EARLY

October 14, 2026 - November 2, 2026

In the 20 days leading up to Election Day,
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This is a great option if you are unable to
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NARRAGANSETT TOWN HALL

25 FIFTH AVENUE, NARRAGANSETT
M-F, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS
*NOV 2 ENDS AT 4:00 PM

NORTH KINGSTOWN TOWN HALL

100 FAIRWAY DRIVE, NORTH KINGSTOWN
MON AND TUE: 8 AM TO 5 PM
WED AND THUR: 8 AM TO 4:30 PM
FRIDAYS: 8 AM TO NOON
EXCEPT HOLIDAYS
*ON NOV 2 ENDS AT 4:00 PM

SOUTH KINGSTOWN TOWN HALL

180 HIGH STREET, WAKEFIELD
M-F, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS
*NOV 2 ENDING AT 4:00 PM



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