

UNDER THE DOME

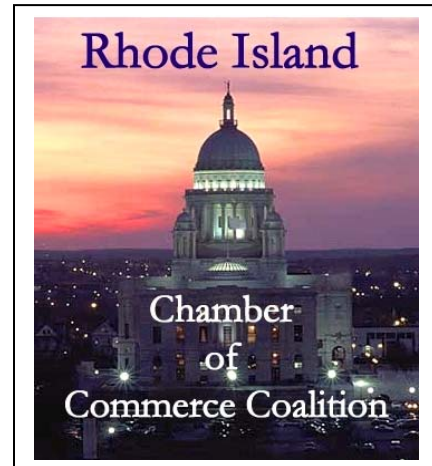
News from the Rhode Island State House

“Your source for Government Affairs information”

*A publication of the
Central Rhode Island, Cranston, East Bay,
East Greenwich, East Providence Area, Narragansett,
Newport County, North Central, Northern Rhode Island,
North Kingstown, Pawtuxet Valley, South Kingstown
& Greater Westerly-Pawcatuck
Chambers of Commerce*

Serving a combined 12,500 member businesses

May 23, 2008



Government Affairs Legislation Update

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/SenateText08/S2467.pdf> (Repeal flat tax option)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition opposes

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/HouseText08/H7181.pdf> (so-called Fair Share)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition opposes

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/SenateText08/S2456.pdf> (Raise the cap. gains tax)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition opposes

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/HouseText08/H7673.pdf> (Fire code bill)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition supports

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/SenateText08/S2516.pdf> (Suit filing)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition opposes

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/SenateText08/S2272.pdf> (Real estate revaluation schedule)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition opposes

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText08/HouseText08/H7225.pdf> (Wage payment frequency)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition supports

Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts' Healthy RI Reform Act of 2008 Synopsis

Below, please find the title of each piece of Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts' proposed Health RI Reform Act of 2008, the bill numbers in both the House and Senate, (if both House and Senate bills exist) and links to the legislation.

- Part I - Healthy RI Strategic Plan and Chronic Care Management Plan - [H-7352](#) [S-2484](#)
- Part II - Cutting edge innovations integrated into publicly purchased insurance - [H-7445](#) [S-2809](#)
- Part III - Quality and Value "all-payer" Database - [H-7465](#) [S-2481](#)
- Part IV - HealthHubRI [H-7910](#) [S-2472](#)
- Part V - Individual mandate and Employer "pay or play" [S-2686](#)
- Part VI - Expand coverage to 25 year for dependent children - [H-7399](#) [S-2684](#)
- Part VII - Reciprocal licensure - [H-7493](#) [S-2286](#)
- Part VIII - Joint Legislative Task Force - [H-7466](#) [S-2222](#)

Chamber of Commerce Coalition Government Affairs Website

The Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Coalition is pleased to announce the following updates made to our government affairs website:

The Chamber Coalition's 2008 Legislative Agenda can be found via the State Issues icon at the top of the homepage or at the very bottom of the homepage.

The chairperson of the Chamber of Commerce Coalition Government Affairs Committee, Thomas Madden, Esq., has a photograph and welcome message appearing on the main page of the site.

The Chamber Coalition member Chambers –and links to their individual websites—can be found at the bottom of the main page, under Community/Partnering Groups.

The Chamber Coalition's Action Alert feature, located on the main page under Take Action, can be accessed by clicking on "Take Action Now!" **(The Chamber Coalition urges readers to click on and follow the easy to use directions, in order to communicate with your legislators about the need to hold the line on new taxes and tax increases.)** The Chamber of Commerce Coalition will ask for the help of local Chamber members in communicating the important concerns of the business community to their state legislators as the General Assembly session moves forward.

The Chamber of Commerce Coalition encourages you to log on to the site and give it a try.

www.RhodeIslandBusinessVotes.com

Chamber of Commerce Coalition overview

Background

The Chamber of Commerce Coalition is an expansion of a lobbying partnership that began in 1996. The Coalition was formed as chambers recognized that Rhode Island needed an advocate at the State House to speak for the interests of business. While laws impact both large and small companies, most

business owners and managers don't have time to attend committee hearings and offer testimony on proposed legislation. By having their Chambers of Commerce act as their voice, company officials can easily have a say in the business of government. By unifying chambers throughout the state, the voice of business becomes louder and stronger.

The Chamber Coalition has grown in strength and numbers in the past eight years, expanding to represent thirteen chambers in Rhode Island and more than 12,500 member businesses.

Structure

A Government Affairs Committee, made up of representatives from each of the nine chambers, governs the Chamber of Commerce Coalition. Each chamber has three voting members on the Government Affairs Committee, plus the chief executive of the Chamber. The chair of the committee is Thomas Madden, Esq., Principal, The Madden Law Firm.

The Government Affairs Committee establishes the Legislative Agenda one month prior to the start of each new legislative session, to present for consideration to the respective Chambers of Commerce in the Coalition. The Government Affairs Committee also makes policy recommendations on issues that

are forwarded to the various Chambers for their review. In order to respond quickly to issues, the Government Affairs Committee is fully empowered by the respective Chambers to determine Chamber

positions on issues and take action on them. In the event the Chamber of Commerce Coalition adopts a legislative position that is in conflict with any partner Chamber(s), the Chamber of Commerce Coalition will not testify on behalf of said partner(s) and will note the difference of opinion for the record.

The Chamber of Commerce Coalition works because of the respect that the participating Chambers have for each other, and their needed autonomy. The three lobbyists for the Chamber Coalition are John C. Gregory, President/CEO of the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, David R. Carlin, III, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and Thomas Madden.

The Chamber of Commerce Coalition was active in supporting

- A four-year effort resulting in historic changes to the State Retirement laws, resulting in millions of dollars in savings to the state and municipalities.
- Legislation permitting Health Savings Accounts in Rhode Island.
- The November 2004 voter approved Rhode Island State Constitutional Amendment on Separation of Powers in state government.
- Passage of both Senate bill 3050 -Property Tax Reform legislation, and a measure placed on the November 2006 Ballot, increasing the state's "Rainy Day Reserves" by 1%. (Now a Constitutional Amendment, it mandates the state be allowed to spend only 97% of all revenue it takes in.)
- Passage of legislation increasing the exemption from local excise tax from \$5,000 to \$6,000. The law exempts the first \$6,000 of a vehicle's value from tax.
- Passage of Part I of the Affordable Health Plan and Reinsurance legislation.

- Passage by the House of legislation requiring tangible property is assessed according to a specific, universal and fair classification table.
- Passage of the Biotechnology Investment Tax Credit.

The Chamber of Commerce Coalition was active in helping to prevent

- Legislation that would subject Chamber members to class action lawsuits and duplicate regulation by state agencies.
- Legislation requiring companies contribute 8% of payroll toward health insurance costs or pay a \$250,000 fine to the state, and publicly release highly proprietary financial information.
- Legislation adding a 7% tax to the sale of newspapers and a 7% tax to the advertisements that businesses take out in those newspapers.
- Legislation adding a 1% or 2% assessment to personal income tax.
- “Extension to Sue” legislation

Remember: The Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Coalition is your voice at the Rhode Island State House. If you have any concerns, questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued interest in government affairs.

Edited by

David R. Carlin III

Coordinator - RI Chamber of Commerce Coalition

Government Affairs Committee

dcarlin@nrchamber.com

401-334-1000 x 107