

SENATOR CINDY COYNE

FALL 2019



Dear Neighbor,

The 2019 Legislative Session has come to an end, and I want to provide you with an update on all that we accomplished to move our state forward.

This year's state budget heavily invests in Rhode Island's future, particularly when it comes to our children. We increased state aid for education by \$31 million, devoted \$14.6 million to early-childhood education and created additional opportunities for workforce development. In light of recent school test scores, the Senate worked with the House to increase school-based accountability and certify that district curricula meet high standards. Education is the foundation for future success, and I believe these investments and policy implementation will serve our children well.

November was Alzheimer's Awareness Month in Rhode Island, so I would be remiss not to mention the work the Senate undertook this year to increase care options for those afflicted by Alzheimer's disease. We established the statewide Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Disease Research and Treatment and enacted new measures to help individuals and their families find care as they battle this terrible disease.

I hope you will take a moment to read this newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at sen-coyne@rilegislature.gov or (401)245-4005 if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,
Cindy

Senator Coyne Leads Task Force on Elder Abuse, Sponsors New Protections



Senator Coyne led the Senate Task Force on Elder Abuse during 2019. After a series of hearings that included testimony from victims, bank executives and financial crime experts, the General Assembly enacted new laws to protect seniors from financial exploitation and abuse.

"From financial scams to emotional abuse, we heard heartbreaking stories of seniors who were taken advantage of by family members, caretakers and online financial predators," said Senator Coyne. "We listened to experts and learned from victims to implement new regulations that will better protect Rhode Island's aging population."

Senator Coyne championed a new law that requires all individuals to undergo national background checks before being permanently appointed guardians. She also drafted a new law that strengthens reporting requirements for the mistreatment or neglect of seniors in medical facilities. Senator Coyne also co-sponsored the Senior Savings Protection Plan, which allows financial professionals to temporarily halt a senior's request to liquidate an asset if they suspect fraud or financial exploitation.



Senator Coyne joined Mrs. Ray's second grade at Waddington Elementary School for Reading Week

Senator Coyne Leads Efforts to Assist Those with Alzheimer's

November was Alzheimer's Awareness month, and this year Senator Coyne led the General Assembly's efforts to raise awareness about the disease and its impact on Rhode Island families. In all, she sponsored three new initiatives related to Alzheimer's disease.

"Alzheimer's disease not only debilitates individuals in the cruelest of ways, it profoundly reshapes families as they struggle to cope," said Senator Coyne. "We must support those who are affected by this disease by exercising every option at our disposal to care for them and find a cure."

Senator Coyne served as the lead sponsor for legislation establishing the Rhode Island Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Disease Research and Treatment. Modeled after Massachusetts' approach, the 13-member advisory council will evaluate the state's current efforts while identifying new opportunities for care and treatment. Senator Coyne also sponsored a new law that allows for spouses or partners of patients residing in Alzheimer's or dementia-care units to reside with them. The goal is to keep patients close to their loved ones.



Senator Coyne has been a champion for new laws to increase research on Alzheimer's disease and support those afflicted by it.

Senator Coyne Introduces Legislation to Ban 3-D Printed Guns

This session, Senator Coyne introduced legislation to ban 3-D printed guns and other untraceable firearms. The bill passed the Senate overwhelmingly, but never received a vote in the House of Representatives.

"While we play catchup on our country's gun epidemic, we must also be forward thinking in our efforts to prevent gun violence," said Senator Coyne. "There's no legitimate purpose for possessing an untraceable firearm, or, even more so, a homemade firearm that is specifically designed and constructed to inflict mass carnage."

The issue of self-made, untraceable firearms has already surfaced in Rhode Island. Last December, federal agents raided a houseboat in Cranston after the owner was indicted for selling a "ghost" machine gun. Banning 3-D printed guns and ghost guns was recommended by the Rhode Island Working Group for Gun Safety, which was established following the Parkland, Florida, school shooting.

Senator Coyne Supports Measures to Build Gender Equity

This year, the General Assembly passed legislation to codify into state law the reproductive rights guaranteed under Roe v. Wade. As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Coyne played a critical role in drafting the final legislation.

"This was a hard-fought victory for privacy and reproductive healthcare," said Senator Coyne. "I am thankful for the many who came before me and bravely fought for this issue, and I am grateful that I could play a small role in protecting these freedoms for future generations."

The state Senate also passed bills related to equal pay, sexual harassment in the workplace and gender-based differences in insurance premiums. While these bills did not pass the House of Representatives, the Senate expects to make them a priority again next year.