



The Rhode Island “Better Budget” Proposal

The priorities and values of Rhode Islanders consistently fall on the side of quality and accessible education, healthcare and jobs, proven public programs that enhance the well-being of our state’s children, seniors and disabled, and investments designed to help low-income people achieve financial independence.

We must act together as a community to preserve the public services and programs that address these priorities. While it is important that our state spending be as efficient and useful as possible, we can not cut our way out of the current \$450 million deficit. We need long-term solutions, including enactment of common-sense revenue proposals that will provide adequate revenue for public programs intended to help every Rhode Islander work, learn and stay well.

In that spirit, the Campaign for Rhode Island’s Priorities offers this alternative “Better Budget Proposal” to the General Assembly to demonstrate that there are choices available to help us balance the state budget equitably and in a way that reflects the priorities and values we all share.

* * * * *

Emergency Campaign Endorsers include: AAUW, RI Chapter, AFSCME Council 94, AIDS Care Ocean State, AIDS Project RI, Center for a Hunger-Free America @ URI, Children with Special Health Care Needs, Children’s Policy Coalition, Clean Water Action, Community Provider Network, Direct Action for Rights and Equality, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Association of RI, International Institute of RI, MHCA/Oasis, National Alliance on Mental Illness of RI, National Assoc. of Social Workers –RI, National Education Assoc. RI, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, NEHCEU District 1199, Newport County Community Mental Health Center, Ocean State Action, Planned Parenthood of Rhode Island, Parents for Progress, Progresso Latino, Inc., Providence Youth Student Movement, Rhode Island AFL-CIO, Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, Rhode Island Disability Law Center, Rhode Island Foster Parents Association, Rhode Island HUD Tenant Project, Rhode Island Jobs with Justice, Rhode Island Latino Civic Fund, Rhode Island Parent Information Network, RI ACORN, RI Alliance for Retired Americans, RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, Save Our Mental Health Services Coalition, Senior Agenda Consortium, Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships, St. Albans Church Food Pantry, Statewide Housing Action Coalition, Teamsters Local 251 Retirees, United Nurses and Allied Professionals, Urban League of RI, Wiley Center, Women’s Center of Rhode Island among others.

General Revenue Income:

Amount	Source
\$600,000	Postpone New Spending: Hold off proposed new IT & Digital Media Center
\$1.8 million	Postpone New Spending: Reduce increase to charter school spending from 9.2% to 3%, in keeping with proposed public school funding increase.
\$3 million	Postpone New Spending: Hold off implementation of STEM initiative
\$6 million	Reduce State Spending: Restructure SmartStaffing no-bid contracts and reassign contracted work to state workers.
\$12 million	Improve Revenue Collections: Close corporate tax loopholes (REIT, PIC, Throwback)
\$17.5 million	Preserve Revenue: Stop elimination of capital gains & restore a reasonable capital gains tax at 5% (\$17.5 million in '08 budget, \$52 million for '09 budget)
\$7.3 million	Preserve Revenue: Freeze alternative flat tax at current rate.
\$12 million	Reduce Revenue Expenditures: Restructure Historic Tax Credit program (\$11 million); Repeal corporate tax credit for contributions to private schools (\$1 million).
\$10.2 million	Increase Revenue Collections: Expand sales tax to selected services (golf courses, marinas)
\$5.3 million	Increase Revenue Collections: Repeal sales tax exemption for newspapers.
\$1 million	Increase Revenue Collections: Repeal sales tax exemption for purchase and lease of private planes
Total: \$76.7 million	

Corresponding General Revenue Expenditures:

Amount	Purpose
\$18 million	Preserve DCYF services & protections for youth ages 18-21, including Family Court jurisdiction, and ensure DCYF investigations for youth over age 16.
\$15.2 million	Preserve eligibility for Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) at existing level.
\$3.8 million	Reject proposed reduction in CCAP rates for before & after school care.
\$4 million	Reject proposals to privatize food service and housekeeping functions at Eleanor Slater Hospital and dietary services at the Veterans Home and the proposal to established limited service positions.
\$1.4 million	Preserve RICLAS funding
\$50,000	Preserve local access for seniors to the Dept. of Elderly Affairs Community Information Specialist (CIS) Network by maintaining program at 16 senior centers through restoration of \$50,000 of proposed \$235,000 cut.
\$599,115	Reverse Rx co-payment requirement for poverty level seniors and people with disabilities.
\$177,181	Preserve clinical supports for STD screenings.
\$1.7	Preserve lead testing and abatement services.
\$150,000	Preserve tobacco prevention programming in the state's middle schools.
\$500,000	Maintain child support pass-through at \$50 level for families in the Family Independence Program
\$2.3 million	Maintain nursing home reimbursement rates for direct labor costs at 125% of the state median.
\$3 million	Restore Rlte Care to non-citizen children and parents and provide a bridge program to maintain health insurance for citizens facing stricter federal paperwork requirements.
Total: \$50.9 million	