



Jeff Stahler | Universal Uclick

READERS' LETTERS

Wise investment can get Rhode Island's economy growing again

Rhode Island needs new leadership and fresh ideas to repair our economy. During my campaign for general treasurer, I have met too many Rhode Islanders who are unemployed and families that are struggling to make ends meet. If we want to get Rhode Island's economy growing again, we need leaders who will step up and make a clean break from the insider politics and mismanagement that are holding our state back.

I am running for general treasurer because that office can and must be a platform for economic growth and job creation. Last month I released my Blueprint for Economic Growth, a plan for how I will use the treasurer's office to revive our economy and put Rhode Islanders back to work.

My blueprint includes new ideas for how to fund infrastructure projects that will put Rhode Islanders back to work fixing our broken roads, bridges and schools. During the New Deal era, when millions of Americans were unemployed, our leaders didn't make excuses.

ELECTION 2014: GENERAL TREASURER

They put people to work building the infrastructure that made our country strong. Today, in Rhode Island, we need leaders who are committed to doing the same.

The blueprint also outlines my plan to direct more of the state's investments locally, to create jobs here at home. The treasurer's office oversees billions in taxpayer funds, the vast majority of which are currently invested in other states and countries. By investing more of these funds locally, we will help Rhode Island businesses to grow and employ more people.

Our public pension system had been plagued by mismanagement and underperformance for too long. As a successful, private-sector investment professional, I understand what it takes to deliver strong investment performance. As treasurer, I will bring a steady hand

to the state's finances and deliver strong returns for our public pension system. I will work to reduce fees and will manage the state's investment with full transparency.

Despite our challenges, I am deeply optimistic about the future of our state. Rhode Islanders are smart, hardworking and resilient. I know that with new leadership and the right priorities, we will bounce back. But we can't keep electing the same old insider politicians and expecting things to get better. We need to have the courage to elect new leaders who will make rebuilding our economy and creating jobs a top priority.

It is with these goals in mind that I humbly ask for your vote in the Democratic primary election on Sept. 9. I know that, together, we can give Rhode Island a fresh start.

Seth Magaziner, Providence

Seth Magaziner is a Democratic candidate for general treasurer.

ELECTION 2014: FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tort reform should be a high priority

In kindergarten, I loved playing on the merry-go-round with my friends. Rarely were we coordinated enough to make it work, but that didn't stop us from having loads of fun trying.

A funny thing happened. The school received money to upgrade the playground, and the merry-go-round disappeared. It didn't just disappear from my school; it disappeared from playgrounds all across the country. People today under the age of 20 likely have never ridden what once was a ubiquitous playground fixture.

The explosion of lawsuits in the 1970s and '80s prompted school officials to remove merry-go-rounds and seesaws. It wasn't that every school was being sued; it was merely the possibility that schools could be sued. As playground structures aged, they were replaced with less "risky" options. School officials were less concerned about the risk to children than the risk of litigation.

The effects of our legal minefield reach far beyond the playground. Teachers can't drive students in their personal car because of liability, so they take a school bus even if it's just for two or three students. Most middle and high school teachers have been threatened with a lawsuit by students, upending the teacher's authority in the classroom.

Our tort system is also hurting the doctor-patient relationship. Doctors are afraid to be honest and frank out of fear that their words might be used against them. General practitioners are unwilling to deliver bad news, because they can be held liable if a patient doesn't follow up. Instead, they transfer that job to one of their specialist colleagues. Doctors order unnecessary tests to reduce their risk of being sued, wasting tens of

Common-sense ideas to reform our litigious culture have been opposed by politicians who receive campaign contributions from trial lawyers.

billions of dollars every year.

We need to restore authority to teachers and doctors so they can use their professional judgment to make common choices. We can accomplish this by having a tort system similar to our worker's compensation system. For example, a patient who suffers a stroke immediately after gallbladder removal can opt to take an assured compensation that covers lost wages and medical cost as determined by an independent panel, in return for giving up the right to sue the surgeon for negligence. This system of removing fault from bad outcomes will reduce legal fees, reduce rates of malpractice insurance, and the savings will fund the compensation pool.

Common-sense ideas to reform our litigious culture have been opposed by politicians who receive campaign contributions from trial lawyers. If we want to simplify and re-humanize our laws, we need to elect fewer lawyers to public office, and have more representation from other professionals such as teachers and doctors who deal with the effects of laws on a daily basis.

Stan Tran, Providence

Stan Tran is a Republican candidate for Rhode Island's First Congressional District. He taught high school before enrolling in Brown Medical School.

Why do we put up with terrible roads?

I recently logged 600 miles of driving in New Hampshire's White Mountains. I never once encountered a road as poorly paved as upper East Main Road, or as ridiculous in terms of traffic flow as the "new" Bristol Ferry Road. That's despite New Hampshire's relatively harsh winters (brutal on asphalt) and low overall tax burden.

What's wrong with our state? How are the "matching federal funds" road bonds

that I vote for at every opportunity being spent? When will upper East Main Road be repaved such that the speed-bump-sized frost heaves are vanquished? When will reasons trump the false promise of "safety" on the now-common 30 mph and congested Bristol Ferry Road? Why do our residents continue to accept poor roads and services in exchange for a high tax burden?

Robert J. Angeli, Portsmouth

GUEST VIEW

Defense sector is well poised for innovation

By Marcel A. Valois



Marcel A. Valois is executive director of the Rhode Island Commerce Corp., or Commerce RI.

Providence Business News recently reported that General Dynamics Electric Boat has hired more than 720 new employees at its Quonset Point facility since the beginning of the year and plans to add 300 to 400 more workers in the coming months.

Earlier this year, the Navy awarded a \$17.6 billion contract to Electric Boat to build 10 additional Virginia-class attack submarines. In addition to the more than 3,000 Electric Boat employees currently at Quonset, the company expects to hire about 3,000 more workers there by 2020, according to published reports.

As a whole, the Rhode Island defense sector supports 32,993 jobs (6.2 percent of total employment) and added \$3.7 billion to the state's economic output, which represents 7 percent of the state's gross domestic product, according to a 2014 defense economy study commissioned by the Rhode Island Defense Economy Planning Commission and the Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

Those are impressive figures for a state smaller than many U.S. counties and with just 1 million people. So what makes Rhode Island so special?

With more than 400 miles of coastline, an impressive line-up of prestigious naval institutions, a "who's who" of defense industry giants, one of the best graduate schools for oceanography in the world, a leading school for ocean engineering and a plethora of businesses pushing the envelope to make everything from sonar and 3D imaging technologies to carbon fiber applications, Rhode Island has harnessed our best assets to build a strong defense sector that's interconnected with private industry and our academic, research and public institutions.

So it's no secret why hundreds of defense contractors have set up shop in Rhode Island. In 2013 alone, the Department of Defense awarded \$712 million in contracts to more than 200 private defense contractors in Rhode Island, the defense study says.

Molly Donohue Magee, executive director of the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA), put it best: "Rhode Island is a sweet spot for defense and related technology companies with its highly skilled technical workforce that meets customers' needs for innovative solutions and services and a scale that allows for real-time coordination between researchers and industry in close proximity to key customers."

Rhode Island also happens to be a "sweet spot" for one of the most high-caliber meetings of defense industry, policy and government leaders. Defense Innovation Days, organized by SENEDIA, will be held Sept. 3-5 in Newport.

The event will feature a keynote speech by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, who will be joined by Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee, the Rhode Island congressional delegation and other congressional, Pentagon and senior defense industry representatives to discuss current trends within the defense industry and the future of technology and innovation. In addition to being a top-tier networking and educational opportunity, the Defense Innovation Days will showcase not only the state's defense capabilities but also Rhode Island's many other business and location advantages to decision-makers from around country.

So what's next for Rhode Island's defense industry?

How about autonomous undersea vehicles, better known as AUVs? At the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography, professor Al Hanson developed sensors for AUVs to better understand the ocean biochemical and ecosystem processes. In working with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Newport, Hanson developed a way to detect compounds and trace elements that constitute explosives. Effectively, his AUV is now an underwater bloodhound, swimming and following the scent of the explosive to its source.

At the forefront of AUV research and development for the Navy, NUWC has a multitude of vehicles in its inventory to perform various missions. It should then be no surprise that Rhode Island companies and universities are helping to expand AUV technologies into other areas such as the oil and gas industry and deep-water undersea exploration.

Rhode Island also has the opportunity to advance the creation of a Maritime Cybersecurity Center and showcase the state's capabilities to a national and international audience. SENEDIA is encouraging Rhode Island leaders to examine ways to further strengthen maritime cybersecurity capabilities to support both the defense industry and commercial ports.

"This initiative has broad impact beyond the defense sector, providing opportunities to grow and sustain the high-tech workforce in Rhode Island," says Commerce RI's "Actions for Economic Development in Rhode Island" report.

Let's continue to build on the foundations of a strong defense and R&D economy so Rhode Island can lead the way in the next wave of military and technological innovation. We hope to see many of you at Defense Innovation Days.

SOMETHING TO SAY?

We welcome our readers' views. Our letters policy follows:

- ◆ Each letter must bear the writer's full name, full address and telephone number (for verification purposes only). We will not publish a letter unless a phone number is provided.
- ◆ We correct errors of spelling and punctuation, and edit letters to conform to Daily News style. We may condense letters for brevity.
- ◆ Letters must be no more than 450 words. Proposed

guest view columns must be no more than 750 words.

◆ We will run no more than two letters per author per month.

◆ Because of the volume of letters we receive, we cannot always publish them immediately.

To send letters:

Mail: Letters to the Editor, The Newport Daily News P.O. Box 420, Newport, RI 02840

Fax: 849-3306

Email: Editor@NewportRI.com

Casino will boost tourism and jobs

When given the choice, some fellow residents would vote against allowing table games in Newport, stating that a casino is not a proper fit for a world-class city. The investors are legislatively required by law to make a \$40 million investment to transform Newport Grand into a Monte Carlo-style casino to feature headline entertainment, a destination spa and other attractions. These amenities will complement Newport and not diminish it.

I urge Newport residents to realize that Newport Grand's renovation project will benefit the community by creating a large, viable facility that attracts tourism and creates jobs.

Chris Rosa, Newport

ELECTION 2014: CASINO QUESTION

Ballot change shows our leaders can't be trusted

Friday's Opinion page brought a "hallelujah" moment that everyone should take note of. It seems that two contributors came to the same realization that their present representatives aren't doing what's best for them. The casino ballot has some feeling as though they were stabbed in the back and are now mad enough to make changes. Maybe this is what it takes to get people's attention.

If you put the same people back in office, then you shouldn't expect any changes. We have a little more than 60 days before we make our choices. Each party has someone who could benefit our current situation. Listen and read about what they are saying. Do more than just pull one lever. If it doesn't work out this time, then there is always the next one.

We need to remember what has been done to us with our present leaders. If you are a government employee and had to give up part of your pay so we could make commitments overseas, then it should be pretty easy to remember.

Richard J. Paris, Portsmouth