



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO

GINA M. RAIMONDO, GOVERNOR

March 12, 2015

To the Honorable General Assembly:

The budget I am presenting to you is rooted in the belief that every hardworking family deserves the chance to make it in Rhode Island.

Despite beginning with a nearly \$200 million deficit, this is a balanced budget. It sets us on a path to eliminate our structural deficit, contains no broad based tax increases, and calls for significant investments in economic growth and education.

From my first conversations with House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello and Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed after the November election, we agreed that our first priority was jumpstarting our economy and creating jobs. I could not ask for better partners in this effort.

The lagging economy not only hurts Rhode Island families, but also harms our state budget. Without enough people working, we can't generate sufficient revenue to invest in the things we care about, like quality schools, better roads and bridges, and public safety.

Every year, our struggling economy forces us into our all-too-familiar budget crunch, where budget writers scramble to find enough cuts to cobble together a final proposal. We can't continue on this path. We need a new direction.

As we chart a new course together, let's expand opportunity so that we can grow the pie -- so everyone gets a bigger piece.

Build-Attract-Innovate

This budget is designed to spark Rhode Island's comeback. It focuses on three things:

- 1) Helping Rhode Islanders **build the skills** they need to compete in the 21st century by investing in K-12 education, making college more affordable, and better coordinating our workforce development programs.

To The Honorable General Assembly
March 12, 2015
Page Two

2) **Attracting entrepreneurs** and investment by making Rhode Island more competitive. We are putting Rhode Island back in the economic development game by offering a robust set of programs to spur job growth. We will implement these initiatives with rigorous accountability provisions, but we need to be aggressive about growing and attracting jobs.

3) Fostering **innovation**, including in our state government, to enhance accountability and deliver value to taxpayers. If we do not take action now, our structural deficit will continue to grow to unacceptable levels.

These principles -- and an unwavering focus on creating jobs and expanding opportunity -- guided every decision we made in assembling this budget.

The people of Rhode Island are counting on us to deliver. Our friends and neighbors are struggling. People are losing faith in government. They expect us to put our personal politics aside and make the right decisions to put Rhode Island on a path to jobs and opportunity.

I know you are aware of these challenges.

This a tough hill to climb, but together we will climb it. We can again make Rhode Island a place of opportunity, where everyone who works hard has a chance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gina Raimondo".

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor