



ASHLEY KALUS

GOVERNOR

**Bringing Open, Honest, and
Transparent Government to the
People of Rhode Island**

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The people of Rhode Island deserve a state government that is open, honest, transparent, and accountable to the taxpayers. For far too long, Rhode Islanders have been shut out, while insider deals are made behind closed doors to benefit the few rather than the many.

My administration will strive to build an inclusive government that is accessible and honest. The most significant piece to reinstilling the people's trust in the government is creating an Office of the Inspector General, which will be committed to rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse. Further, we must ensure state employees have a voice to better understand where improvements can be made within the agencies to best serve constituents. We also need to promote truly open meetings so people can see the inner workings of their government.

In addition, my administration will create the Office of Performance Management, fight for the line-item veto to be enacted, and reform the state procurement process because contracts should be based on merit and not on who in government a company knows. If we take these steps, we can begin to rebuild the people's trust in our government.

Ashley



▶ **Office of Inspector General:** For years, lawmakers in Rhode Island on both sides of the aisle have called for the formation of an Office of the Inspector General in our state.¹ Their rationale for the need – to combat rampant waste and fraud in our state government – is more than valid and evidenced by the corruption we have seen in just the McKee Administration. Creating this office and giving it the full independence to conduct the investigations necessary within our state is a top priority of mine. As we root out waste in our government, I am committed to using those savings to reinvest in Rhode Islanders, not political insiders or wealthy corporations.

- Additionally, I would task this office with a full review of the state’s unemployment office, which has been plagued with problems for years. Even with the agency claiming problems have been fixed, we are still hearing reports of more work needing to be done to root out fraud and improve services.

▶ **Being a conscious steward of your tax dollars:** Not only will it be a priority of my administration to cut taxes for hardworking Rhode Islanders, but with the dollars our state still brings in, I vow to be a conscious and responsible steward. In the past two administrations, we have seen wasteful spending explode in our state – Dan McKee alone has doled out \$60 million for the Pawtucket Soccer Stadium deal, \$40 million for the Superman Building, and is under FBI investigation for awarding state contracts to his friends. These are not just dollar figures, they represent your dollars entrusted to the government. With that in mind, each decision I make in terms of spending will be made with the highest return on investment possible to the people of Rhode Island – spending on your future will always be one of my top priorities.



¹<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/02/ri-lawmakers-push-for-new-inspector-general-office/13983709007/>

- ▶ **Giving state employees a voice:** The state government in Rhode Island is the largest employer, and beyond the laws and policies we put forth, our operations have a direct impact on countless families. That is why a tenant of my administration will be to ensure our voice in our government is heard – whether that be complaints, ideas for innovation, or reporting of improper activity. To achieve this, within the first six months of my administration, I will create and distribute an anonymous survey open to every state employee to provide their full feedback and opinions. My administration will then review this, look for areas to amend or improve policies, and hold subsequent roundtables as needed to improve the lives of our employees and the operations of our government.
- ▶ **Creating a stable government:** For too long, positions within the Governor’s Cabinet have been left to the direction of interim or acting directors. A WPRI report in late June found that the Governor had nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of cabinet positions filled in this manner. Failing to fill these positions with permanent directors, in some cases for years, leaves the credibility and effectiveness of our institutions and agencies in question. That’s why, as Governor, I would make it a priority of my first 100 days to find qualified individuals to serve as permanent positions in my cabinet.
- ▶ **Office of Performance Management:** In addition to elevating employee voices and ensuring each is given the opportunity to provide feedback, we also need to improve efficiency in our operations. To address this, I would bolster the [Office of Performance Management currently living within the Department of Administration](#). My goal would be to increase overall government efficiency by 10% in my first year and conduct a review of the work done so far to develop new recurring benchmarks.



▶ **Open Data, Open Meetings - a Commitment to Transparency:** Rhode Island is one of 48 states to have embarked on a form of an open data portal: <https://www.ri.gov/data/>. However, recent actions in the current administration have proven more needs to be done to ensure transparency, and more importantly – any individual running for our state’s highest office must make a public commitment to upholding, creating, and enforcing transparency standards to the highest degree. At the beginning of my term, I will conduct a full assessment of our state’s current internal operations and identify areas where more information can be provided to the public in an easily accessible manner.

▶ **Line Item Veto:** Much like an Office of the Inspector General, for years, Rhode Islanders have pushed for a line-item veto to be enacted. Currently, Rhode Island is one of only six states not to use this tool, while both Connecticut and Massachusetts have adopted it. As we work to root out wasteful spending in our state government, a line item budget veto would be invaluable in putting a stop to spending and programs that are costly and provide little-to-no direct benefit to the people of Rhode Island. I am committed to working with my partners in the General Assembly to finally get this enacted and to make our use of it in future budgets as transparent and open as possible.

▶ **Modernizing RFP (State Procurement) Process:** With the ILO scandal that has unfolded this year and resulted in the current governor falling under investigation by the FBI, it has become clear that more needs to be done to reform our state procurement process. I would enact these steps:

- Make a centralized system for all publicly posted contract documents more user-friendly;
- Increase ethics training and additional requirements for the training, continuing education, and certification of state agency purchasing personnel;
- Require ROI audits and public posting of results on all major state contracts awarded;
- Create a vendor performance tracking system open to the public;
- Increase resources to aid minority, women, and veteran owned businesses in navigating the state contracting procedures.



²<http://www.lineitemveto.org/>



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