

SENATOR Cindy Coyne

WINTER 2021



Dear Neighbor,

I am truly humbled to serve as your state senator, and every day I strive to live up to the trust you have placed in me.

I am writing to update you on some of the progress that was made during the 2021 legislative session. It was a very productive one, during which many efforts that we have worked on for years were enacted into law, including a \$15 minimum wage, the Act on Climate, and legislation I have worked on to protect seniors from exploitation. We took urgent action to help small businesses weather the challenges of the pandemic, including appropriation of federal funds in the form of small business grants.

For a more complete listing of 2021 session highlights, please visit the General Assembly website, www.rilegislature.gov. As always, I encourage you to reach out to me if I may be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Cindy



@CindyCoyneForStateSenate



@CindyCoyneRI

Supporting Seniors

Having chaired a special commission exploring ways to protect seniors from abuse and financial exploitation, Sen. Coyne has shepherded into law several bills to better protect elders who sometimes must rely upon others. This year, a law she sponsored was enacted requiring financial institutions report suspected financial exploitation to authorities.

She also sponsored a new law allowing cities and towns to offer seniors a break on their property taxes for volunteer hours given to their municipality. "Many older property owners struggle under the burden of property taxes. This bill enables them to use their time and skills to give back to their communities while easing that burden," said Sen. Coyne.

Sen. Coyne also supported the Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act, which protects both residents and caregivers in long-term care settings.



Supporting Small Business

Small businesses are the backbone of the Rhode Island economy, and the pandemic took a heavy toll on many of them.

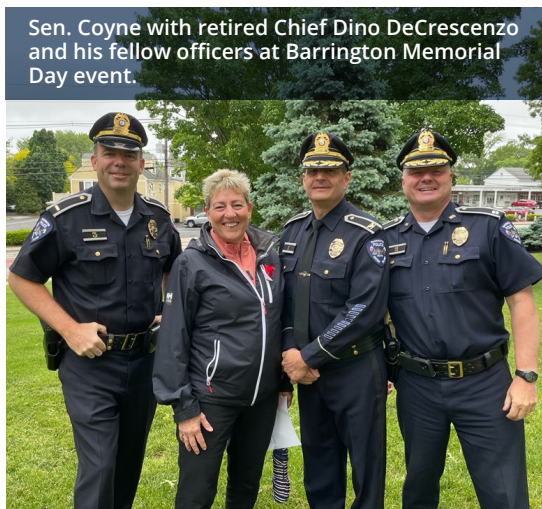
Sen. Coyne supported numerous measures to help small businesses recover, including allocating federal CARES ACT funding for direct assistance, such as grants to offset the costs of complying with safety protocols. She supported passage of a package of bills designed to help the hospitality industry, allowing the sale of alcohol to go and outdoor dining, and requiring third party delivery operators such as GrubHub and DoorDash to operate with the permission of the restaurant owners.



Supporting the Environment

Our coastal state is already seeing the impacts of climate change. This session, Sen. Coyne co-sponsored one of the most substantial climate laws ever to pass in Rhode Island. The Act on Climate sets enforceable standards to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Sen. Coyne also supported legislation requiring development of a plan for statewide electric vehicle charging stations, as well as bills to reduce single-use plastics, including straws, among many other environmental measures approved this session.



Supporting Working Families

Senator Coyne has supported annual increases in the minimum wage throughout her time in the Senate. This year, she succeeded in passing a law that increases the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour over the next several years.

She also supported a series of bills that help close equity gaps in the workplace, the Pay Equity Act to ensure equal pay for women and minorities, an expansion of Temporary Caregiver Insurance benefits to give workers more time off to bond with a new child or care for a sick loved one, and an expansion of the state's paid sick leave law to protect employees who work for multiple employers, such as those in the construction industry.

Among the additional major initiatives Senator Coyne supported in 2021 are:

- Passed historic affordable housing investments, including \$65 million bond and creation of dedicated, permanent funding stream; established housing czar; prohibited housing discrimination against Section 8 recipients
- No firearms on school grounds
- Suicide prevention initiatives
- Funding for school field trips
- Required insurers to cover telemedicine
- Prohibited co-pays for COVID-related health care services