

As a former governor I am concerned about the future of Rhode Island. The State faces major problems on so many fronts: high unemployment, too much underemployment, the condition of the states infrastructure with roads, bridges and public buildings in disrepair, underperforming schools, municipal pension systems in tough shape, and some cities and towns on the brink of bankruptcy. The State is really struggling. This next election is an opportunity to elect leaders who are up to the task of solving these major challenges.

The number one priority for the next administration is to get people back to work in good jobs and grow the State's economy. I appreciate the depth and breadth of Gina Raimondo's approach to job creation. She understands that the enormity of the problem requires a comprehensive solution. She has begun to roll out a jobs plan that will bring manufacturing back to Rhode Island, rebuild the State's infrastructure, improve workforce development, promote tourism and support start-ups and small businesses. She has a well thought out plan that is grounded in real-world solutions that are working in states across the country.

It is not enough to have great plans; you have to be able to put those plans into action. I have watched Gina's work and I know that she is up to this task. When she took on the state pension issue, a problem that had long been neglected, she clearly demonstrated the qualities that are so necessary to handle the major initiatives that are now needed to get this State back on track. It took intelligence to develop a plan for meaningful pension reform; political skill and leadership to gain the support of the General Assembly and put that plan into place; and most of all a person with courage that understood the true meaning of public service – to focus performance on what is in the best interest of the people that you represent and not be deterred by concerns about the next election.

She was not the Governor; she was not the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House. She was the Treasurer, a state office with limited authority, and she had just arrived. She knew what had to be done; knew it wouldn't be easy; knew it had political costs and yet she took that challenge head on and in her first two years in public office accomplished the most significant pension reform in the history of this state and for that matter, in the history of almost every other state in the country.

As I watched that issue unfold I knew that a very special person had entered the political scene in Rhode Island.

Having served 16 years as a councilman, mayor and governor, I have a pretty good idea about what it takes to govern this State. Gina Raimondo is bright, dynamic, brave and just what we need as the next governor of Rhode Island. I am proud to be supporting her in this campaign.

Governor Philip Noel

