



GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

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PRESS RELEASE



Governor McKee Signs Legislation to Support Rhode Island Seniors

PROVIDENCE, RI – Governor Dan McKee, joined by Senator Cynthia A. Coyne, and Representatives Joseph J. Solomon and Jason Knight today ceremonially signed into law two pieces of legislation to support Rhode Island's aging population.

The first piece of legislation ([2021-S 0264A \[r20.rs6.net\]](#), [2021-H 5642A \[r20.rs6.net\]](#)) requires financial institutions to report suspected financial exploitation of seniors to the Office of Healthy Aging.

“I am proud to serve Rhode Island’s aging community in any way possible,” said Governor McKee. “Ensuring that our most dear neighbors are not taken advantage of financially is a no-brainer and I thank the bill sponsors and advocates who make Rhode Island better for everyone, including folks like my mom, every day. I’d also like to commend my colleagues in the House and Senate for developing such an innovative volunteer program; congratulations!”

“Financial exploitation is a serious and growing problem for the elderly,” said Sen. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence). “Many elderly people rely on caregivers to handle their financial matters, and unfortunately, some people abuse that trust. Banks, credit card companies and other financial institutions can be very helpful in preventing that abuse, because they are often able to identify suspicious activity in accounts. We should make sure we are taking full advantage of their tools, and making them our partner in protecting senior citizens from this type of abuse.”

“Abuse and exploitation of the elderly is a growing concern and one of the most egregious crimes committed in this state,” said Rep. Solomon (D-Dist. 22, Warwick). “A recent study estimates that one in five older Americans are victims of financial exploitation, losing \$3 billion annually. As our population ages, crimes of this nature will become more prevalent, and we need to do everything we can to protect our older citizens.”

The second piece of legislation ([2021-S 0103 \[r20.rs6.net\]](#), [2021-H 6238 \[r20.rs6.net\]](#)) authorizes cities and towns to establish programs to offer tax credits to property owners age 60 or older in exchange for volunteer hours, allowing seniors to earn up to \$1,500 off their property taxes.

“Many older property owners, particularly retirees, struggle under the burden of their property taxes. Allowing them to reduce their tax liability by volunteering for their city or town lets them use some of resources they have — time and skills — to lighten the load,” said Sen. Coyne. “This is an idea that would benefit seniors and municipalities alike.

Seniors are very dependable volunteers who have a lifetime of skills and experience to offer. In these days of tight municipal budgets, it could bring in some very valuable volunteers for cash-strapped towns.”

“Besides the obvious financial benefits for both seniors and the towns, this is an idea that can also strengthen our communities, creating new opportunities for town residents to meet and interact with their neighbors, and helping older residents maintain connections and form new ones in their neighborhood,” said Rep. Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren).

"This is good legislation that not only protects our senior population against exploitation but also enables our seniors, many of whom are on a fixed income, to give back to the community and benefiting from some tax savings," East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva said.

The bill signing took place at the East Providence Senior Center