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LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

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John P. Burke

Rhode Island Senator, SD-009 (D)

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rilegislature.gov/senators/burke/Pages/Biography.aspx

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2025 RI Legislative Scorecard: 17%

✓ Constitutional ✗ Unconstitutional — Did not Vote **Vote**

1. Right to Education: Would place a proposed constitutional amendment before voters to create a state constitutional right to an "adequate education" and equal opportunity to receive that education.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · S0177 · Passed 35–0 · 04/08/2025

2. Insurance Mandate for Contraceptives: Requires health-insurance plans to cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility for women ages 25 to 42.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · S0103 · Passed 32–2 · 05/20/2025

3. Green Constitutional Amendment: Would place a "Green Amendment" before voters to amend the state constitution and create a constitutional right to clean air, water, and soil, as well as "a life-supporting climate," and environmental preservation.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · S0327 · Passed 32–4 · 06/03/2025

4. Minimum-wage Increase: Increases the minimum wage to \$16 per hour on January 1, 2026, and then to \$17 per hour on January 1, 2027.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · S0125 · Passed 33–4 · 06/12/2025

5. Assault-weapons Ban: Bans the sale of so-called assault weapons.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **No** · S0359 · Passed 25–11 · 06/20/2025

6. Baby Bonds: Creates a baby-bond pilot program for certain low-income families.



Constitutional: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · H6071 · Passed 34–1 · 06/20/2025

Why do these votes matter?

1. Right to Education

S177 would place a proposed constitutional amendment before voters to create a state constitutional right to an "adequate education" and equal opportunity to receive that education.

The Rhode Island State Senate passed S177 on April 8, 2025 by a vote of 35 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the nays because education is not the proper role of government, but the constitutionally protected responsibility of parents. This proposal would further entrench government control over education and tie the hands of future lawmakers by constitutionally obligating them to fund it. Education should be privately directed, with parents—not the government—making decisions about what is best for their children.

2. Insurance Mandate for Contraceptives

S103 would require health-insurance plans to cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility for women ages 25 to 42, including related procedures and services.

The Rhode Island State Senate passed S103 on May 20, 2025 by a vote of 32 to 2. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill would force health insurers to cover infertility procedures that are tied to in vitro fertilization and other assisted reproductive technologies, which often result in the destruction or indefinite freezing of human embryos. Government should not compel individuals or insurers to subsidize practices that treat preborn human life as disposable. Such laws grossly violate property rights and the free market. Because the right to life is the most fundamental God-given and unalienable right—protected by the Declaration of Independence and secured by the Fifth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution—lawmakers should reject policies that normalize or financially support the destruction or cryo-incarceration of preborn children.

3. Green Constitutional Amendment

S327 would place a "Green Amendment" before voters to amend the state constitution and create a constitutional right to clean air, water, and soil, as well as "a life-supporting climate," and environmental preservation. The resolution would elevate environmental policy into the state constitution, potentially expanding the basis for lawsuits, judicial intervention, and broader government regulation.

The Rhode Island State Senate passed S327 on June 3, 2025 by a vote of 32 to 4. We have assigned pluses to the nays because the proposed Green Amendment would not protect God-given rights, and would even violate or undermine them. Such proposals constitutionally enshrine Marxist and globalist policies, handing sovereignty to the United Nations and its Agenda 2030 plan. Climate change is a proven hoax used to control people, impeding individuals' life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, as well as property rights and the free market.

4. Minimum-wage Increase

S125 raises the state minimum wage in two steps. It increases the minimum wage to \$16 per hour on January 1, 2026, and then to \$17 per hour on January 1, 2027.

The Rhode Island Senate passed S125 on June 12, 2025 by a vote of 33 to 4. We have assigned pluses to the nays because minimum-wage laws are anti-constitutional, discriminatory acts of government theft. They forcibly deny the property rights of both employers and employees by violating their freedom of association, preventing individuals from entering into contracts voluntarily according to their own terms. As dishonest and manipulative tactics to control labor in the economy, minimum-wage laws create an unequal balance of wealth confiscation and redistribution, hindering the best workers from getting the best jobs at the best prices.

5. Assault-weapons Ban

S359 bans the unlawful sale of certain firearms classified by the state as prohibited weapons, making it a major gun-control measure aimed at restricting access to so-called assault weapons in Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island State Senate passed S359 on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 25 to 11. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill infringes on the Second Amendment, which clearly states that "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Instead of defending constitutionally protected rights, this legislation empowers the state to further erode them under the guise of public safety.

6. Baby Bonds

H6071 creates a baby-bond pilot program for certain low-income families. Under the bill, the state would place \$3,000 into a trust account for each eligible Rhode Island child from birth to age one whose family was enrolled in the Rhode Island Works program during the prior year.

The Rhode Island State Senate passed H6071 on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 34 to 1. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill imposes government-directed wealth redistribution and creates state-managed trust accounts for selected children. While helping families build savings for their children is a worthwhile goal, this uses taxpayer money to pick winners and losers, expands dependency on taxpayer-funded benefits, and embraces the false notion that government handouts are the proper way to build generational wealth. A sounder and more constitutional approach is to remove legal barriers, so all parents can invest for their children equally under the law, without arbitrary eligibility rules, favoritism, or socialistic wealth-transfer schemes.