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“Preserving federal benefits could be life-changing when youth exit state care ...”

Rhode Island Office of the Child Advocate



For years, DCYF took benefits intended for foster kids like Renee Gomes, who was living on her own at 18. Here, she sets up items at Hope Market in Rumford for the Wildflower Misfit Collective on April 25. DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Town ups fight over sludge facility

North Kingstown eyes legal action vs. Quonset

Alex Kuffner

Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Despite assurances that a proposed sewage sludge disposal plant in the Quonset Business Park won't move forward in the near term, North Kingstown officials are considering legal action to fight the controversial project.

The Town Council has hired a law firm with expertise in environmental issues to represent North Kingstown's interests as the debate unfolds over the facility put forward by Quonset Soil Solutions, an affiliate of Cranston-based Green Development.

At a public meeting April 27, Town Manager Ralph Mollis said attorneys at Desautel Browning Law are reviewing documents to determine possible next steps for the town.

“Once they're done, they will do a full legal and technical review of the approval and evaluate whether it makes sense to take administrative action or take court action,” Mollis told hundreds of residents at the meeting in the high school auditorium.

The town's decision to bring in outside legal counsel has the support of Gov. Dan McKee, who spoke at the meeting, saying that “if Quonset doesn't back down, then you're going to need that representation.”

While McKee has previously said he would stand with Quonset if the town continues to oppose the project, he spoke more emphatically at the meet-

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‘The right thing to do’

RI Senate bill would restore federal benefits owed to foster children

Katie Mulvaney

Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Renee Gomes found herself on her own at age 18, grabbing shelter with any friends who would have her.

Born to a mother with addiction is-

sues, she spent the bulk of her childhood in residential care due to her mental health and behavioral struggles.

“I was couch surfing. I was homeless. I had a lot of trauma,” Gomes, now 41, said.

Years later, as she was getting clearance from the state Department of Children, Youth and Families to become a peer recovery specialist, she discovered that her case as a former foster child had remained open until she was 21, despite her adoption. She had never met a case-

worker, received federal survivor's benefits, Social Security or any support at all. An adoptive sister told her dismissively at her father's deathbed that she received disability benefits, she said.

“It's baffling. I wasn't living at home. Were they collecting money?” she said. She wondered about benefits foster children can receive through age 21, even those who are adopted.

See FOSTER CARE, Page 4A

Smiley launches reelection bid, touts record of ‘doing the work’

Antonia Noori Farzan

Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

PROVIDENCE — Mayor Brett Smiley formally launched his campaign for reelection April 27, saying that the city needs “experienced, responsible governance” to face the challenges ahead.

Smiley, a Democrat, is facing a spirited primary challenge from Rep. David Morales, a progressive whose attention-grabbing videos have drawn a following on social media.

Addressing supporters at the Roger

Williams Park Casino, Smiley said being mayor “isn't about shouting down a protest or being a social media star.”

“It turns out real solutions don't fit nearly into a 30-second video,” he said. “Being mayor is about doing the work.”

Smiley also alluded to his controversial decision to veto the rent stabilization ordinance passed by the Providence City Council earlier this month.

“The solution to our housing crisis is not new restrictions and mandates from City Hall,” he said.

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Providence Mayor Brett Smiley announces his reelection bid at the Roger Williams Park Casino on April 27. He faces a primary challenge from Rep. David Morales. DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL



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