

NEWS RELEASE

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Chafee Identifies Significant Savings Opportunity in State Building Usage

(Warwick, Rhode Island, July 26, 2010) Lincoln D. Chafee, independent candidate for Governor, today sharply criticized the state's failure to use over 400,000 square feet of state-owned office space, especially in light of the millions of taxpayer dollars spent each year to rent privately owned office space for a myriad of state agencies. Chafee announced that, as Governor, he will take both immediate and long-range steps to correct this imbalance.

"I find it incredible that our state—which owns approximately 1,500 buildings and 80,000 acres of land across the state—has no plan in place to minimize, if not eliminate, the costly practices of commercial office leases in the private sector," stated Chafee. "Worse yet, many of these buildings—which I view as valuable taxpayer assets—have been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair for no reason other than neglect," he continued.

The state has dozens of unoccupied buildings, totaling more than 400,000 square feet of space, while at the same time spending \$11.9 million each year on 33 leases of privately owned buildings. The state pays these private-sector landlords to renovate and modernize their own buildings in order to house state offices—a capital expense that the state will never see a return on.

At a press conference held in front of a dilapidated state building in the Pastore Complex in Cranston, Chafee proposed a three-pronged plan to correct what his campaign refers to as "irresponsible waste and needless inefficiency." The plan is as follows:

- 1) Complete the renovation of the historic, state-owned, 165,000-square-foot Cranston Street Armory, followed by the relocation there of three of the state agencies currently holding high-rent leases with private landlords.
- 2) Launch a thorough, case-by-case review of all 33 leases currently held by the state in commercial office buildings.

- 3) Development of a Master Property Utilization Plan that will clearly and transparently lay out a new vision for state-owned properties. This plan will conceive of the Pastore Complex in Cranston as a centrally located, mass-transit-accessible “government services mall,” supported by three regional hubs in Blackstone Valley, Bristol County and South County.

“Currently, our citizens’ access to government services is challenged by geographically inconvenient locations, which often lack adequate parking and access to public transit and are dispersed in such a way as to often needlessly require multiple trips,” Chafee stated. “In light of this, it is all the more disturbing that we are ignoring our own assets and paying a king’s ransom in rent to private-sector landlords. It’s time to change this practice and replace it with sound, cost-effective management of our taxpayer dollars.”