



November 6th, 2020

Candidate for House Speaker State Representative Liana Cassar (HD 66, Barrington and East Providence) issued the following statement today:

As we all watch the vote count of the presidential race, it is critical that we consider suppression and coercion, not only at the polls, but everywhere within our democratic institutions and processes.

Over the past four years, nationally and locally, the mobilization within the Democratic Party has primarily been driven by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), women and members of other marginalized communities. Unfortunately, instead of embracing the work and increased membership that these new voices have brought to the Rhode Island Democratic Party (RIDP), there has been an effort to subdue and dismiss them.

Historically in Rhode Island, there have been many legislators who run as Democrats and do so without being committed in word or deed to the Democratic Party Platform. I am a Democrat because I agree with and agree to actively work to support the four pillars of the Barrington Democratic Town Committee platform - good and transparent government, support for social justice, economic stewardship and environmental stewardship.

As many are aware, last night's vote at the House Democratic Caucus is predictive of the leadership of the Chamber, but what is lesser known, is that it is also predictive of the leadership of the Rhode Island Democratic Party. The result of last night's vote, likely to be repeated during the official vote on January 5, 2021, determines that Majority Leader Joe Shekarchi will be elected Speaker.

During Thursday night's caucus, Majority Leader Shekarchi mentioned that he would be working with me. I look forward to working with him on our shared work at the State House which will include my key priorities:

- Restoration of the Committee Chair and membership appointments that were stripped in the 2019-2020 session as a result of the 2018 Speaker vote
- Gender and racial equity, and inclusion across leadership and committees
- Reform of the Joint Committee on Legislative Services (JCLS) so that the staff of the State House remains separate from elections and the political workings of candidates

- Reform of Committee processes to empower Committee Chairs and depoliticize the decisions of which bills are heard in committee and which bills are voted out of committees
- Refinement of the legislative process so that all substantive bills receive a timely and fair hearing and vote
- Office space for all House members
- Improved communication with House members regarding anticipated schedules
- A democratic Speaker election process without undue influence on House members for their votes
- Commitment to budgets that are not balanced on the backs of the vulnerable in our state

I also look forward to discussing concerns about the RIDP with Leader Shekarchi. I will be discussing with him these goals for the RIDP:

- Gender and racial equity, and inclusion across leadership and committees
- Progressive women in the RIDP leadership
- An end to the marginalization of any factions of the RIDP
- A commitment by ALL members of the leadership team of the RIDP to support the Democratic Party platform
- Equal treatment of all candidates regarding access to RIDP resources and inclusion in RIDP communications

My message in this race has been consistent. I believe that we, together, can and should envision a better and more inclusive way to work in the General Assembly. I remain a candidate for Speaker of the House and look forward to continuing meaningful conversations with my colleagues about how we together expect to organize our House and Party leadership.

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