

The Providence Journal

Monday, April 7, 2008



Excerpt from Political Scene: “State EMA’s new communications coordinator, Kass, takes a major pay cut”

By Katherine Gregg, Steve Peoples, Cynthia Needham and Scott MacKay
Journal Staff Writers

D.C. group says R.I. is youngster-friendly

This morning’s release of the annual Kids Count report was not the only good news for Rhode Island children in recent days.

Last week, a report by the “Every Child Matters” Education Fund, a nonprofit agency based in Washington, D.C., ranked Rhode Island fourth in the nation at creating a healthy environment for youngsters.

Percentagewise, the state has the fewest uninsured children, the fewest deaths for children under 14, the fewest births to women receiving no prenatal care and the lowest per capita child welfare expenditures. It has the 16th-fewest children living in poverty, according to the report. “It’s a national context that really reinforces a lot of what we’ve found here,” Elizabeth Burke Bryant, executive director of Rhode Island Kids Count, told Political Scene.

“Every Child Matters” — which focuses on the ramifications of public policies on the lives of children — ranked the 50 states on a variety of indicators, nearly all of which placed Rhode Island in the top 20. Overall, Vermont came out on top as the safest state for children, with states like Mississippi and Louisiana ranking at the bottom.

“I think this study gives evidence that Rhode Island’s investments in children are really paying off in terms of positive outcomes for children,” Burke Bryant said.

Perhaps most significant is the state’s top ranking in the area of health insurance. Ninety-four percent of children in this state are insured, 64 percent of them having employer-based coverage from a parent’s place of business, Burke Bryant said.

But the governor’s proposed budget, including a plan to remove roughly 2,800 noncitizen children from the state’s RIte Care insurance program and the projected elimination of state money for the Head Start program could curtail those gains, she said.