



Mark Zaccaria for House District 32

Representative Craven is On Record

For many voters in Rhode Island a new syndrome has evolved. Call it '38 Studios Overload.' The symptoms are profound fatigue and difficulty maintaining focus. They appear anytime the subject is raised in the media or a stump speech. This week The Rhode Island Center for Freedom and Prosperity risked inducing an outbreak of this condition when it released its Legislative Scorecard compiling the results of all 38 Studios related votes taken over the last Seven Sessions. The non-partisan center-right think tank created a valuable picture of who's who in the RI House and Senate, even though many a voter's eyes glazed over before the crux of the information could be absorbed.

The ill-fated 38 Studios Bond Deal was approved by the legislature without having ever seen the sunlight of publicity or analysis beforehand. The almost immediate failure of the enterprise that followed its passage led many to believe that this outcome was widely expected by the very legislative leadership that pushed it through. Sadly the curious actions of the General Assembly did not stop there. In two subsequent budgets taxpayer money has been appropriated to repay the now delinquent bonds, even though state government has no legal obligation to do so. Not only was the risk involved clearly spelled out in the prospectus investors reviewed before signing on, but there was also an insurance policy in force to pay off the bonds in the event of default.

Over the last seven legislative sessions there have been numerous votes related to this mess. Chief among them were the budget votes to pay back investors despite there being no legal need to do so. Many sitting legislators today were not members during the initial votes, but the Center for Freedom and Prosperity rated everyone on the direction of the votes they did cast. The real importance of this exercise is that it illuminates the usually dark process of House and Senate Leadership forcing needlessly expensive, unnecessary, and unwanted measures down our throats. The recent vote on Truck Tolls comes to mind as another example of this quaint custom up on Smith Hill.

The Center's scoring of each legislator ranged from -26 to +26. The lower scores represent the greatest willingness to use the Taxpayers as an ATM to pay for this folly. The higher scores represent the greatest courage in defending constituent's pocketbooks. Here in House District 32, incumbent Rep. Robert Craven Sr. received a score of -22. He was not a member when the original vote to approve the bonds was taken. He has sided with leadership pretty consistently, however, for all the votes he has been able to cast. He must be an intelligent man. An attorney by profession, he must understand the critical difference between moral obligation and general obligation bonds. Still, he has chosen to ignore the needs of those he represents in order to serve the Speaker. I, for one, hope the voters of this District will consider that on November 8th.

Mark Zaccaria

Mark Zaccaria is the endorsed Republican Candidate for RI House District 32. He is the past chair of the Rhode Island Republican Party and a former member of the Town Council in North Kingstown.

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