

Ken Block: The First 100 Days

As Governor, my two initial tasks will be hiring and appointing people to serve in my administration and proposing a state budget. However, there are many urgent challenges that require action beyond staffing decisions and the state budget.

These are my seventeen priorities for my **first 100 days in office**.

Healthcare

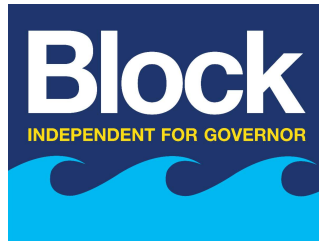
Number 1. I will begin conversations with the five other New England Governors about organizing an interstate effort to comprehensively analyze the potential costs and benefits of establishing a regional health insurance marketplace across New England.

Number 2. I will begin working with our four-member Congressional delegation to raise Medicare reimbursement rates for providers in Rhode Island.

Number 3. I will work with Rhode Island's hospitals and health insurance companies to craft legislation for my "One Stay, One Bill" proposal, which would require hospitals to send a single bill to a patient after any hospitalization. I will then build support in the General Assembly for that legislation.

Number 4. I will assemble a team within my administration focused solely on improving the efficiency of healthcare spending by Rhode Island's state government. This will include a review of any findings by the Auditor General relating to healthcare programs, a review of the government agencies managing healthcare policy, an analysis of our \$5 billion in annual Medicaid spending, and assessing the state's ability to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to providers. We will take a close look at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and identify any areas of overlap and duplication. The goal is not to reduce overall spending on healthcare. The goal is to achieve the greatest possible benefit for every dollar that we spend.

Number 5. To improve dental and oral-surgery access, we will address reimbursement and participation problems that contribute to shortages of dentists and oral surgeons, including Medicaid payment issues.



Number 6. I will reform PBM (Pharmacy Benefit Managers) practices and protect independent pharmacies by requiring greater transparency and accountability for pharmacy benefit managers, examining reimbursement and market practices that undermine community pharmacies and access to prescriptions.

Nothing said here runs counter to the goals of the Affordable Care Act, also known as the ACA or Obamacare. My opponent Helena Foulkes has been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on television commercials and mailers that misrepresent my positions on healthcare policy. While I was critical of the Affordable Care Act twelve years ago, I view it as settled law today. As Governor, I will not take any actions that undermine the ACA.

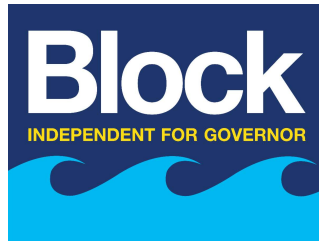
I support key provisions of the ACA, such as allowing young adults to stay on their parents' healthcare plans until they're 26. In fact, I do exactly that with my own two adult children. I also support requiring health insurers to accept people with pre-existing conditions. The ACA allows millions access to healthcare. It should continue to do so. My comments in 2014 were related to the ACA's inability to control the escalating cost of health insurance and the wisdom of creating a healthcare exchange just for Rhode Island. We all know how poorly UHIP turned out.

I want to expand access to health insurance and healthcare services. I want to ensure we have high-quality healthcare providers in our state. I want to bring down the cost of health insurance for employees, individuals, and families. And I want to make sure we maximize federal spending on healthcare in Rhode Island.

Energy policies and energy bills

Number 7. I will direct the Office of Energy Resources to allocate every dollar possible from upcoming Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auctions to energy bill relief for low-income households.

Number 8. I will work with Rhode Island Energy, the Public Utilities Commission, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers and the Office of Energy Resources to develop a plan for ending subsidies to out-of-state renewable energy projects and directing those funds back into Rhode Island clean energy projects.



Number 9. I will work with the General Assembly to enact legislation that pushes back our 100% renewable energy goal from 2033 to 2040 and incrementally remove property taxes levied by municipalities and fire districts from energy bills.

Unaffordability in Rhode Island

Number 10. I will work with the General Assembly to enact legislation that removes income taxes on social security.

Number 11. I will push for legislation to prohibit auto insurers from using credit-based insurance scores when determining rates.

Number 12. I will push for legislation to reduce taxes and fees on cell phone bills. Rhode Island currently has the highest state and local wireless tax and fee burden in New England at 15.75%.

Affordability, transportation, environmental management, and efficiency

Number 13. After installing a new director at the Department of Transportation (DOT), I will determine a timeline for merging DOT with the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority and begin working with the General Assembly to enact enabling legislation.

Number 14. I will assemble a team within my administration to focus solely on analyzing the Washington Bridge fiasco including ongoing litigation.

Number 15. I will determine a timeline for merging the Department of Environmental Management with the Coastal Resources Management Council and begin working with the General Assembly to enact enabling legislation.

Number 16. I will take steps to fill any unused capacity at the Bristol Veterans Home including addressing staffing issues or other operational barriers. We must eliminate the 25% vacancy rate as quickly as possible.

Number 17. I will assemble a team within my administration to focus solely on failing computer systems and contracts with consultants and outside vendors relating to technological services to our state government. This would include UHIP (Unified Health and Human Services Information Platform) and our payroll system.