



Portsmouth Democratic Town Committee

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MARJORIE LEVESQUE, VICE CHAIR
JOHN MCDAID, TREASURER
VALERIE SEVENEY, SECRETARY

RESOLUTION OPPOSING ELECTION OF NICHOLAS MATTIELLO AS SPEAKER

The Portsmouth Democratic Town Committee finds the following facts and circumstances:

1. The Rhode Island General Assembly provides an outsize role for Speaker of the House which includes broad discretion to control legislation and committees. This expansive set of powers has effectively allowed 3,611 residents in the current speaker's home district to outweigh the wishes of almost one million Rhode Islanders. Such a system requires a speaker to act with humility and cognizance of their larger constituency.
2. The current speaker, Nicholas Mattiello, has used these powers to prevent floor votes on legislation supported by a large majority of Rhode Islanders (and the RI Democratic Party platform), including the Reproductive Health Care Act.
3. The Speaker, according to multiple news reports, failed to take timely, effective action on complaints of sexual harassment. In at least one reported case, an alleged harasser was allowed to chair a committee before which an alleged target had legislative business, raising serious questions about the impartiality of the process and the creation of a hostile workplace environment.
4. Despite the Chair of the Rhode Island Democratic Party explicitly welcoming “both wings” to the state party's “big tent,” the Speaker has dismissed the RI National Organization for Women and the RI Coalition Against Gun Violence, both of which are home to many self-identified Democrats, as “extreme progressive groups.” He has also ignored calls from the Democratic Women's Caucus and supported candidates who aimed to unseat incumbent Democratic women.
5. This pattern of facts raises significant questions about the current Speaker's commitment to equal representation, protection of victims of harassment, fair and transparent government processes, and tolerance for differing positions which is a hallmark of Rhode Island dating back to our founding.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Portsmouth Democratic Town Committee hereby calls upon all members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives not to support Rep. Nicholas Mattiello for Speaker.

Adopted on the 1st day of November, 2018.