

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

*No. 118*

*Approved February 25, 2011*

WHEREAS, On Wednesday, January 26, 2011, Rhode Island Legal Services management announced plans to layoff its entire paralegal staff of 13 employees the following week; and

WHEREAS, The paralegals work as support staff for Rhode Island Legal Services lawyers, and provide most of the translation for Rhode Island Legal Services, and layoff of the paralegals will cause the program to lose its ability to serve Spanish and Portuguese speaking clients; and

WHEREAS, Many of the paralegals are long-term employees, who serve as advocates in administrative-level appeals for unemployment compensation, nutrition assistance, RI Works, RiteCare, Medicaid, Social Security, Section 8, and project based housing hearings; and

WHEREAS, Such a lay-off would deprive the Providence community of much of the institutional knowledge and experience which enables Rhode Island Legal Services to provide effective representation to the most vulnerable among us; and

WHEREAS, The union representing these employees, SEIU District 1199NE, has expressed a willingness to re-negotiate various provisions of their contract in order to achieve the cost savings and avert lay-offs, in order to ensure that Rhode Island Legal Services can still meet its mission to deliver "equal justice under the law"; and

WHEREAS, To date, Rhode Island Legal Services management has been unwilling to meet with the employees' union to discuss such options.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of Providence thanks the dedicated employees of Rhode Island Legal Services for their continued service to the community, and recognizes the value of their work and experience.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council of Providence calls upon the management and the Board of Directors of Rhode Island Legal Services to meet immediately with the employees' union and negotiate the terms of employment which will allow Rhode Island Legal Services to maintain their current staffing level and effectively serve the people of Providence.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
FEB 17 2011  
READ AND PASSED

  
PRES.  
  
CLERK

**APPROVED**



**MAYOR**

2-25-11