



State of Rhode Island

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE ANASTASIA P. WILLIAMS, *District 9*

Chairwoman, Committee on Labor

Committee on Oversight

Committee on Rules

July 21, 2022

The Honorable Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor of Providence
City Hall
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mayor Elorza:

Over the weekend I read a troubling Providence Journal article (7/15/22) about Camp Cronin, its non-use for almost 10 years, and the recent activity to presumably reopen the city's recreational property.

As the story circulated throughout the community over the weekend, I received numerous calls from the community – the young, families, adults and the elderly all shared their wonderful memories and experiences from past trips to Camp Cronin when it was operational. While I was touched by these remembrances of the past, I was equally disturbed by the fact that every single phone call ended with complete disappointment and disbelief at the current unacceptable state of neglect and disrepair at Camp Cronin. Drawing upon my own wonderful memories of Camp Cronin, the disillusionment and sadness expressed by the community broke my heart and it is clear that the residents of Providence need and deserve a fully operational Camp Cronin to experience and enjoy the natural beauty of Rhode Island that is often taken for granted by other communities in the state.

It is no secret that our urban communities are always the residents who suffer the most and our city's children and older adults have suffered significantly more during the deadly and severely disruptive pandemic, requiring real and tangible support and encouragement to aid our community's healing and recovery. Camp Cronin has the opportunity to serve as a significant and vital piece of this recovery while also helping to reestablish trust with the government during these uncertain and trying times.

We have both taken on the responsibility of ensuring that social justice is served within our community, therefore, it is our obligation to secure and provide opportunities for our youth, our disabled and elderly populations in Providence, who are too often forgotten about and ignored. While so many residents of the state are able to hop in their cars and head to the beach once the thermometer hits 90 degrees, many of our urban residents do not possess the same luxury – a disheartening reality that would be reversed with the reopening of Camp Cronin.

After almost a decade of abandonment, the need for Camp Cronin and the escape it provides – the open space, the beautiful beaches, the waterfront, fresh natural air and the significant history of the surroundings - to our inner city residents is unquestionable and the need grows on a daily basis. The influx of funding the city has received throughout the pandemic has made this the perfect time to invest in a property that has brought so much joy and happiness to city residents in the past. If we truly want to improve the quality of life for Providence residents, reopening Camp Cronin would constitute a significant step toward this worthy goal.

For these reasons, I am requesting an immediate meeting with you to further discuss an outreach plan in order to invite other concerned organizations and residents to this important dialogue. In particular, the need for a transparent public forum where status updates, plans, realistic possibilities and target dates for scheduled improvements, repairs and the eventual reopening of Camp Cronin are discussed with the community will help greatly alleviate the uncertainty, disappointment and anger circulating within the community about the future of Camp Cronin and Providence residents' access to our state's beautiful natural resources.

I look forward to your immediate response regarding this important piece of city property and history that our residents not only need to know about and enjoy, but also deserve, especially in these times when the opportunities and natural resources of our state are unknown to too many in the city with temperatures of many kinds and on many levels continuing to rise on the streets.

Sincerely,



Representative Anastasia P. Williams
RI House of Representatives – District 9

cc: Rep. Edith H. Ajello
Rep. Christopher R. Blazewski
Rep. Nathan W. Biah
Rep. Rebecca Kislak
Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell
Rep. Raymond A. Hull
Rep. David Morales
Rep. John J. Lombardi
Rep. Scott A. Slater
Rep. Grace Diaz
Rep. José F. Batista
Rep. Ramon A. Perez
Rep. Charlene M. Lima
Sen. Maryellen Goodwin
Sen. Ana B. Quezada
Sen. Samuel D. Zurier
Sen. President Dominick J. Ruggerio
Sen. Samuel W. Bell

Page 3
July 21, 2022
Mayor Elorza

Sen. Tiara Mack
Sen. Frank A. Ciccone
Council President John J. Igliazzi
Councilman John Goncalves
Councilwoman Helen Anthony
Councilwoman Nirva R. LaFortune
Councilman Nicholas J. Narducci Jr.
Councilwoman Jo-Ann Ryan
Councilman Michael Correia
Councilman James Taylor
Councilwoman Carmen Castillo
Councilman Pedro Espinal
Councilwoman Mary Kay Harris
Councilwoman Katherine Kerwin
Councilwoman Rachel Miller
Councilman David A. Salvatore
Councilman Oscar Vargas