



TAILLIGHTS OR HEADLIGHTS?

Picture the taillights on Interstate 95. Thousands of families, graduates, taxpayers, business men and women, and investors leaving Rhode Island. Instead of applying their talents and skills, their degrees, and their wealth to help turn around our Ocean State home, they are fleeing for greener pastures.

Imagine, instead, the headlights of these same people, and tens of thousands of others, streaming back into Rhode Island to raise their families and to build their careers.

No single indicator should be of more importance to lawmakers and civic leaders than whether or not our state is retaining and attracting talented and productive people. The opportunity for prosperity is a primary factor in the migration of families from state to state. In this regard, our Ocean State is losing the race.



Far too many Rhode Islanders are fleeing our state, leaving a swath of empty chairs at our family dinner tables. If we want to keep our loved ones at home with us and give those who have left a reason to return, we must take bold action to reform our approach to public policy and to civil society.

Imagine our Ocean State as a more attractive home and destination of choice for families: A state that offers financial security today and opportunity for prosperity tomorrow where individuals and businesses are successful in increasing the overall wealth of our state’s economy and enhancing the quality of life for all Rhode Islanders.

When it comes to overall family prosperity, Rhode Island ranks 48th in the nation, according to new research analyzing a broad range of family-related data — the 2016 Family Prosperity Index (FPI). It’s time to examine why this is the case and what political and civic leaders can do to address Rhode Island’s low ranking.

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