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State of Rhode Island

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

21-19

March 2, 2021

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, the citizens of Rhode Island deserve a government that maintains the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct;

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the citizens of Rhode Island believe in and trust their state government;

WHEREAS, ethics and integrity in government are necessary and essential for the effective delivery of government services to the citizens of Rhode Island;

WHEREAS, all ethical issues faced by state officers and employees must be promptly resolved; and

WHEREAS, as Governor, I expect all officers and employees under my direction, supervision and control to act with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Rhode Island at all times.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DANIEL J. MCKEE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island, as my first Executive Order, which Order is

applicable to myself, and all officers and employees within the jurisdiction of the Chief Executive of the State of Rhode Island, hereby order and direct the following:

1. All persons subject to this Order shall comply with the mandates of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics, as stated in Title 36, Chapter 14 of the Rhode Island General Laws and its related rules and regulations, and shall abide by the decisions of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission affecting such officers and employees.

2. All persons subject to this Order shall likewise comply with other laws pertaining to ethics and integrity in state service.

3. The director of each department of state government (or an appointee designated by him or her) and the chairperson of each board, commission or other body subject to this Order shall be designated as Public Ethics Officer for such board, commission or entity.

4. Each Public Ethics Officer shall be proactive in the promulgation of this Order and shall take all appropriate measures to inform other officers and employees subject to their jurisdiction as to the contents thereof.

5. Each Public Ethics Officer shall take appropriate action to encourage inquiries from officers and employees under their jurisdiction with respect to the Code of Ethics.

6. The Governor's Executive Counsel is hereby designated as the Public Ethics Officer for the executive offices of the Governor and for each of the Public Ethics Officers referred to herein. The Executive Counsel may, in appropriate circumstances, seek the advice of the Ethics Commission with respect to issues pertaining to the executive offices of the Governor and the Public Ethics Officers named herein. The Executive Counsel shall also be responsible to ensure that Public Ethics Officers are notified of relevant ethical issues in the application and enforcement of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics.

7. Each Public Ethics Officer shall promptly notify the Executive Counsel as to all questions concerning ethical behavior raised by officers and employees. The Public Ethics Officer and the Executive Counsel shall advise officers and employees with respect to issues relating to or arising out of the Rhode Island

Code of Ethics, this Order, and other laws pertaining to ethics and integrity in state service, including but not limited to the right of such officers and employees to request independent advisory opinions from the Rhode Island Ethics Commission with respect to the Code of Ethics and such laws. The Executive Counsel shall from time to time consult with the Rhode Island Ethics Commission with respect to issues which rightly should be addressed by the Commission.

8. All persons covered by this Order are encouraged to act in the most ethical manner consistent with law and to bring to the attention of their supervisors and the Public Ethics Officers their concerns with respect to the application of the Code of Ethics.

9. In addition to the foregoing, all officers and employees under my jurisdiction shall be mindful of their responsibilities under law under the Access to Public Records Act, as stated in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, the Open Meetings Act, as stated in Title 42, Chapter 46 of the Rhode Island General Laws and other similar laws dealing with open government.

10. All persons covered by this Order are to demonstrate the highest standards of probity, virtue, accountability and integrity in delivering this administration's executive leadership to the citizens of Rhode Island.

11. Without limitation on the foregoing, the following code of conduct is mandated for officers and employees subject to the jurisdiction of the office of the Governor:

RHODE ISLAND EXECUTIVE BRANCH CODE OF CONDUCT INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

I declare my commitment to conduct myself at all times according to the highest principles of integrity and professional conduct in carrying out my public responsibilities and will adhere to the following standards:

- I will not use public service for private gain. In all matters of official concern, the public interest will take precedence over any private interest.

- All my acts will be guided and inspired by a commitment to public service and by respect for the Constitution and the laws which emanate from it.

- I will perform my duties to the best of my ability without favor or prejudice and in a manner that merits the trust and confidence of the public.

- I will properly care for and preserve all public property in my custody or control and will not use public property in a manner inconsistent with the laws or regulations of this State.

- I will respect and safeguard all confidential information to which I have access in the course of my official duties and will not abuse or misuse any information with which I am entrusted.

- I will serve the public with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness.

- I will uphold the ethical and moral principles in the Code of Ethics in the R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 36-14 and this Code of Conduct.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:

Daniel J. McKee
Governor