



November 12, 2012

Dear Fellow East Siders:

While the major focus of last Tuesday's election was our choice of President, Providence voters approved a series of ballot questions that will affect our City going forward.

By approving Question 8, Providence voters authorized the City to borrow \$40 million to repair roads, based on a priority list developed according to a rubric of engineering criteria (rather than politics). This represents around 30% of the total cost required to repair all of the City's roads, but will deliver tangible benefits in our neighborhood, such as along Olney Street. At a hearing at Nathan Bishop, some of our neighbors noted that we should do a better job maintaining our roads on an ongoing basis, and I intend to urge the City's Public Works Department to increase its budget allocation for such items as crack sealing.

Voters also approved Question 18, a measure I worked on with Common Cause to amend the City's Home Rule Charter to reform the redistricting process. The reforms will ensure that the next redistricting includes stronger substantive standards and more transparent procedures. In the coming months, I will be preparing legislation to implement the new Charter provisions.

While our decision as voters to approve these and other ballot questions can lead to improvements in our State and our City, the time that voters required to review all of these questions lengthened voter waiting times considerably. I am hopeful we will learn lessons from this experience. First, we need to do better to inform voters about the issues raised by ballot questions. Some of you used summaries I prepared, but it would be better if the City were more proactive in informing all voters. Also, it may be time to advance an early voting program to allow voters a wider window of time to cast their votes, thereby reducing the pressure on Election Day. This change likely would require a change in State law.

On **Tuesday night, November 13, at 5:45 p.m.**, the Education Committee will meet on the third floor of City Hall to discuss a proposed resolution to urge the School Department and the School Board to preserve the neighborhood character of any "in-district" charter schools. So far, we have learned that the School Department has asked the State Department of Education for a variance from the traditional feature of a City-wide lottery, but we have not learned whether or when the Department will review the request. The City Council resolution would essentially require this issue to be resolved favorably in order for the application to move forward. As indicated in last week's letter, the King Elementary School is the designated neighborhood school for a broad neighborhood, and many East Side families would lose access to a neighborhood elementary school if King becomes a full-City school. The Education Committee welcomes public comment. If approved, the measure will go to the City Council for consideration at its next meeting on Monday, November 19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samuel D. Zurier'.