

**UP AND DOWN**  
Mild with showers ending later today, turning sharply colder overnight.  
**Forecast, B6**

# The Providence Journal

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**FACING THE DEFICIT**

## Housing programs would be curtailed

The governor is proposing using \$26 million from Rhode Island Housing, money the agency says it does not have.

**BY CYNTHIA NEEDHAM**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — Buried deep in the long list of proposed cuts in the governor's mid-year budget revision are two that advocates say could have a devastating impact on affordable housing in Rhode Island.

The first plan would scoop \$26 million from Rhode Island Housing, the independent state agency that lends money and provides grants for affordable-housing projects. The second eliminates all money for the \$7.5-million Neighborhood Opportunities Program, the seven-year-old state fund that helps finance affordable housing for those who make less than \$30,000 a year.

If either proposal is approved by the General Assembly, advocates say projects throughout the state will probably be canceled and in some cases families will be left without homes they've been waiting for.

"They're talking about taking critical housing resources from one of our biggest financial partners and then coupling that with zeroing out the help from the Neighborhood Opportunities Program. It just ties our hands," said Brenda Clement, executive director of the Statewide Housing Action Coalition.

A Carcieri spokesman repeated the now familiar refrain that the administration has been forced to make difficult decisions as it tries to close a \$150-million budget gap, even when it comes to programs like these, which the governor has supported in the past.

But another state official, Noreen Shawcross, executive director of the state's Housing Resources Commission, acknowledged that the proposed cuts would have a tre-

SEE **HOUSING, B6**

## Unions see benefits cuts as 'repulsive'

The governor's proposal would make it more costly for state employees to retire after July 1, according to labor leaders.

**BY KATHERINE GREGG**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — Union leaders yesterday accused Governor Carcieri of trying to "frighten" 3,143 state workers eligible to retire into leaving state government before July 1 to avoid having to pay more — and in some cases, the full tab — for their post-retirement health coverage.

They hurled words such as "devastating" and "betrayal" at Carcieri's attempts to cut the taxpayer cost of this retiree health benefit by \$9.8 million.

They described his proposal to allow state retirees to return to the state payroll without giving up their pensions — a practice that was outlawed in the early 1990s — as a thinly veiled attempt to head off chaos across state government if Carcieri drives state employees out in droves. Within the Department of Corrections alone, union chief Richard Ferruccio said 173 employees are now, or soon will be, eligible to retire, which would "create a very serious situation" at the state prison if they all left at once.

SEE **RETIRE, B2**

# McCain wins Florida vote



AP / ALAN DIAZ

Arizona Sen. John McCain celebrates his primary victory in Miami last night. Rudy Giuliani's poor showing dealt a blow to his chances at the Republican presidential nomination.

The Arizona senator edges Mitt Romney to solidify his front-runner status among Republicans a week before Super Tuesday.

**BY MICHAEL COOPER and MEGAN THEE**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

MIAMI — Sen. John McCain edged out Mitt Romney to win the delegate-rich Florida primary last night, solidifying his transformation from left-for-dead candidate to a front-runner and dealing a devastating blow to the presidential hopes of Rudy Giuliani, whose distant finish here threatened to doom his candidacy.

McCain's narrow victory showed he could win in a state where only Republicans were allowed to vote — not just in states such as New Hampshire and South Carolina, where his earlier victories were fueled in part by independent voters. And in Florida, even a slim victory is sweet: the

state awards its 57 delegates, the most of any contest yet, on a winner-take-all basis.

"We have a ways to go, but we're getting close" to the nomination, he told a group of cheering supporters last night after his victory.

With 96 percent of the precincts reporting, McCain had 36 percent of the vote, Romney 31 percent, Giuliani 15 percent and Mike Huckabee 14 percent.

In a concession speech, Giuliani sounded very much like a defeated candidate, saying the fight for his ideals would continue despite the election results. In fact, the Associated Press reported that Republican officials said Giuliani would endorse McCain today in California.

"Elections are about a lot more than candi-

SEE **CAMPAIGN, A5**



AP / GERALD HERBERT

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani addresses supporters last night.

**COUNTDOWN TO SUPER BOWL XLII**

## THEY MAKE PATS' SCORES A BLAST

Kevin Collins, of Marlboro, Mass., a member of the 4th Middlesex Regiment/Regiment de Saintonge 85eme, is among the End Zone Militia — a group of Revolutionary War reenactors that fires muskets after the Patriots score during home games in Foxboro.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

**BY MARK ARSENAULT**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Revolutionary War reenactor Charlie Walsh participates in large-scale battles and small skirmishes around the Colonies as a member of the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment reenactment group.

He has fought the British at Saratoga, Yorktown and Monmouth.

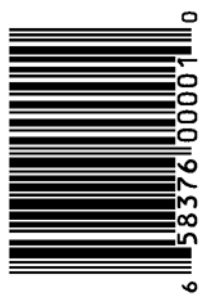
During the National Football League season, Walsh battles the Jets, Bills and Dolphins in Foxboro, as a member of the End Zone Militia, the musket-wielding minutemen who fire crackling volleys whenever New England Patriots fans have something to cheer about.

Finally, a hobby for both the sports fan and the history buff — celebrating scores by

SEE **MILITIA, A5**

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Extra: For a gallery of photos of Media Day yesterday at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., and for daily multimedia reports on this year's Super Bowl and Patriots Super Bowl history, go to [projosports.com/patriots](http://projosports.com/patriots). For the latest news from our writers at the Super Bowl, go to [projosports.com/patsblog](http://projosports.com/patsblog)



**INSIDE TODAY**

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7 SECTIONS

Ask Amy	<b>E8</b>	Local News	<b>D1</b>
Bridge	<b>E8</b>	Lotteries	<b>C7</b>
Business	<b>F1</b>	Obituaries	<b>D4</b>
Classified	<b>F4</b>	People	<b>E5</b>
Comics	<b>E9</b>	projoCars	<b>G1</b>
Crossword	<b>E8</b>	Rhode Island	<b>B1</b>
Editorial	<b>B4</b>	Sports	<b>C1</b>
Food	<b>E1</b>	Television	<b>E10</b>
Legal ads	<b>A7</b>	What's Happening	<b>E8</b>
Lifbeat	<b>E5</b>		

**HOUSE SPEEDS STIMULUS PACKAGE**

The House votes overwhelmingly to approve a \$146-billion fiscal stimulus package while Senate Democrats forge ahead with their own, more expensive plan despite warnings that they risk delaying much-needed help for the economy. **A2**

**WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ AT ISSUE**

Although President Bush in his State of the Union address touted the withdrawal of 20,000 U.S. troops from Iraq by the summer, that would still leave upwards of 135,000 military personnel in the country with no indication of when they might come home. **A7**

**CONSTRUCTION UNDER WAY**

Work begins on the 13-story headquarters building of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island at the corner of Finance Way and Exchange Place near Waterplace Park in Providence. **F1**

**SANTANA GOES TO METS**



The New York Mets appear to have beaten out the Red Sox and Yankees by acquiring ace lefthander Johan Santana from the Minnesota Twins in exchange for four players. **C1**