

GOP chair Allyn Meyers sells RI on Republicans

POLITICAL SCENE



Allyn Meyers, the new chairman of the Rhode Island Republican Party, in February. KATHERINE GREGG/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Katherine Gregg

Providence Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

If history is any guide, Allyn Meyers has a hard sell in Rhode Island - the Rhode Island Republican Party.

But the personal touch this salesman brings to his newest, and perhaps toughest, sales job yet was evident when he arrived for his first in-person meeting with this Journal reporter.

The newly elected state GOP chairman arrived with a gift - which is definitely not the norm - and, more specifically, a coffee mug still tightly bound in the bubble wrap that had secured its safe journey from Zabar's on Broadway in New York City to lunch in Bristol, Rhode Island.

For anyone who doesn't know, Zabar's is one of the most famous delis in New York City, and one that had come up in our first-ever email exchange when he was running for a state Senate seat in July 2024.

"I noticed that you're from NYC," he wrote at that time. "My family is from there. My aunt lived in the Upper West Side until 2021. She worked for Walter Cronkite. My uncle worked for Norman Lear as an executive

writer.”

“Perhaps we have mutual acquaintances?”

Now here he was, in Bristol, little more than two weeks after his Jan. 29 election as RI GOP chairman, acknowledging that he spent a lot - in time and money - on his way to this moment in time.

As he tells it, that meant countless hours on the road, creating Republican town committees where there were none in his then-role as chairman of the GOP town committee chairs.

He now proudly reports that the GOP has “boots on the ground” in every town except North Providence.

The state GOP's election-year goal?

The same as it's been for decades: Boost the number of Republicans in positions of power at all levels of government, in a state where Republicans currently hold only 14 of 113 legislative seats and Democrats occupy every statewide and congressional office.

Meyers' own goal? “To build a professional election-ready party ... to have [the] machine that the Democrats have.”

“It took 70 years to get here. It doesn't get fixed in one election,” he said. “But it's my goal.”

Can he do that with President Donald Trump as the face of the Republican Party? He thinks so.

Who is Allyn Meyers?

Allyn, now 61, grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts.

His father was ahead of his time as the owner in the late 1960s of a computer company that “made computer control panels for nuclear power plants.”

His own first love from high school on was computer engineering and analysis. But his first job out of Bridgewater State College took him in a different direction.

He was a counselor/advocate at a nonprofit human resources company, where he moved up the union ranks over 10 years, from steward to five terms as an AFSCME union president.

“I got a raise every single year for our people,” he said.

Meyers started his first computer company nearly 30 years ago and had five stores in Canton, Randolph and Easton, Massachusetts, and Greenland, New Hampshire, that sold and serviced computers and provided network support for companies as a network engineer and systems analyst.

He closed the last of his stores in 2015 and says he is now “semi-retired.”

In 2016, he downsized, moving from a too-big house in Dighton, Massachusetts, to Tiverton, Rhode Island, not far from his daughter, who is both a nurse and artist.

He said Rhode Island's slow reopening from the COVID pandemic prompted him to run for public office in 2022 and again in 2024.

Asked if he, like many in his party, refused the COVID vaccine, he said: “Everybody's ... health choices are their own health choices.”

What are his politics?

“I've been a Republican since I was 18 years old.”

His inspiration? Then-President Ronald Reagan, a movie actor-turned politician, “was a big part of it. ... I liked him. I liked his behavior. I liked his positions. I liked everything about him. ... [His] movies had really nothing to do with it.”

“I liked his demeanor.” When asked, “Are you happy with the 'demeanor' of the current president?” he said: “I don't think we've had a president who is a New York street fighter of a businessman like this before. And I think it shocks people,” Meyers said.

But, as Meyers sees it, Trump was repeatedly attacked during his first term with “fake” allegations - such as the “Russian Hoax.”

And “when someone is attacked, they attack back, and he's a New Yorker,” Meyer said. Adding, “you should understand [where] his attitude comes from.”

“Stop calling him names. He'll stop calling you names.”

But “I don't live my life around wondering what the president is saying today. I say, OK, is the economy OK?”

As “they say, you eat the meat and spit out the bones.”

Asked about the meme portraying the Obamas as apes that appeared recently on Trump's Truth Social account, Meyers said: “foolish.”

But he said he called the Republican National Committee to ask - what's this about? - and was told: “A staffer put something out. He's probably in Siberia right now.”

He described Trump's pardon of 1,500 or so people convicted of assaulting police officers and other crimes during the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol as a chance to “move on” from a “dark time.”

“We have a history of this,” said Meyers citing then-President Bill Clinton's commutation of the sentences of two women affiliated with the Weather Underground terrorist group on his last day in office.

Meyers says he personally cares more about “our influence across the world.”

“Having other countries in NATO paying their fair share.” Not feeling “danger because they underestimate us ... is probably a little bit better for sleeping at night.”

To get more Republicans elected in Rhode Island, will the state GOP double down on its support for Trump or distance itself?

“You're talking about the man, Donald Trump, and we're talking about the policies of Trump,” Meyers answered.

“We're seeing lower inflation. We're seeing prices coming down. We're seeing the stock market at top rates, and that matters [to] people with 401(k)s.”

What does he share on social media?

Meyers has been outspoken on social media.

“Another criminal co-conspirator heard from,” he said on June 22, 2025, above a post questioning what Secretary of State Gregg Amore's own post lauding passage of Rhode Island's new ban on the sale of assault-style weapons means for gun owners.

Another post reflected his suspicion about “illegal” immigrants on Rhode Island voter rolls.

He reposted, and then commented on, an entry on social media platform X quoting Antonio Gracias, a high-profile volunteer on Elon Musk's DOGE team, on "illegal" immigrants.

Gracias is quoted as saying: "We found that there were about 5 million of them who came into the country illegally. ... We then looked to see if they were on the voter rolls, and in a handful of cooperative states, we found thousands of them. Many of them had voted."

On Oct. 5, 2025, Meyers posted this response on X: "It has been stated that it's believed that 30,000+ of these people are on the RI Voter rolls. Every election cycle the [rolls] swell a month before the election and come off in January the next year."

"Maybe this is why the DOJ are fixated in RI," he said, in his post, of the Trump administration's pursuit of confidential Rhode Island voter data - such as driver's license and Social Security numbers.

There are many reasons, of course, for the post-election removal of inactive voters who have not voted in two consecutive presidential elections.

But the 30,000 post-election drop that Meyers cited - or anything close to it - did not materialize in the aftermath of the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections, according to numbers provided by the secretary of state's office.

Meyers has not provided The Journal with the data he recalls seeing.

In his gut, however, he believes that somewhere in Rhode Island's "bloated" voter rolls are people who should not be there.

More questions for the new GOP chairman

Q: With little more than eight months until Election Day 2026, what is your focus: Town councils and school committees? State offices? Legislative and congressional seats?

A: We're not going to cede anything. I think that we have the bandwidth now that we didn't have just three years ago to support candidates on a local level and on the state level because our town committees are set up. We can't compete money-wise. We know that. So what we can compete on is boots on the ground in an organization.

Q: What will you do differently than your predecessors?

A: "I think a focus on our candidates, looking for more what I call 'qualified candidates,'" he said. "I mean, we need people who are professionals. We need people who understand. Our state has lost so much, business-wise.

"I'll use an example," he continued. "We don't have manufacturing anymore."

But "we just had Pete Hegseth, Secretary of War, come to Electric Boat the other day. Our congressional delegation didn't even show up, including someone on the Armed Services Committee," he said of U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, who is up for reelection this year. (Reed said he had a scheduling conflict.)

"I'm sorry. I don't care if they're Democrat or what they are. [There's] disrespect there," Meyers said.

"It's one of our biggest businesses. ... They just announced 3,500 new jobs, making - this is going to hurt - Donald J. Trump the largest job-maker in Rhode Island currently."

Q: Democrats excel at mail ballots. Do you share Trump's objections to mail ballot voting?

A: "No, no. That would be foolishness," he said. "That would be just giving up."

But, "I'm not for generalized mail-in ballots. I am for the way it always was. If you are traveling, you live out of the country or you're sick, you're infirm, the elderly that don't get out that much. Absolutely no problem."

Q: What about early in-person voting?

A: "I'm open to maybe a day or two or something. ... [But] dragging this off two, three weeks ... this is craziness."

Q: Rhode Island already has Voter ID. Should voters also be required to produce "proof of citizenship"?

A: Rhode Island lawmakers created a problem "when they gave out the driver IDs [to undocumented immigrants] and they made them [indistinguishable]," he said. "Everything is exactly the same."

Meyers said he asked Secretary of State Amore, at a public event, what's to stop someone who is not in this country legally from voting, "and he said to me, ... 'It's illegal.'" "And I said, 'Wait, wait, where is the stop for someone just doing that?' And he says, 'Well, it's illegal.'" "That has to stop," Meyers said. "There has to be something on these IDs that says, 'I am not a citizen.' ... This is not disenfranchisement."

Q: Conversely, how easy will it be for citizens, including married women with their husband's last names, to prove their citizenship?

"We have birth certificates. We have to use them for everything else," he said. "Look, when I had to get my REAL ID, it was a pain for me to go dig up that stuff, but I did it. I just had to, and so if that is the mindset of protecting our country, I'm OK with that."

Q: With their ballots, a majority of Rhode Island voters have indicated they do not agree with many GOP positions. How do you get past that?

A: "You're really going to have to give me some examples. I don't know what you're talking about."

"The party is not a monolith, as you well know," he continued.

"We have centrists like, Ken Block. We have very conservatives, we have very liberals," he said. "There's this faction all over Rhode Island trying to wrest control, if you will, of the Republican Party."

Q: Which are the top issues that you believe the state's ruling Democrats have screwed up?

A: "The Act on Climate is one of them. That was unrealistic. Unscientific. The unrealistic part is ... they're not even federal goals, they're global goals."

Next? "Our sales tax is an absolute destructive force in this state," he said. "Knock it in half ... [to] 3 1/2%. That may even be too high."

How would he make up the revenue shortfall? "What shortfall? You ever buy gas in Massachusetts? You spent your money in Massachusetts. That's gone into a lower tax zone."

Next? "A crumbling infrastructure. We cannot fix a bridge," he said, adding he'd just come over the Mount Hope Bridge and it was "full of potholes."

"We just paved that nine months ago," he said. "It's already fallen apart and full of potholes. ... It took me 20 minutes to get here."