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## Governor Chafee has Increased Female Representation on Boards and Commissions and in Staff and Cabinet Level Positions, Report Shows

### *Governor Keeps Promise to Double Number of Female Appointments*

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*Providence, RI* – Governor Chafee joined with the Women’s Fund of Rhode Island at the State House today to celebrate the Governor’s commitment to having women represented in senior positions within state government and on boards and commissions. As a candidate, Governor Chafee pledged to double the number of female appointments – a promise he has kept. The event also marked the release of the Women’s Fund’s first RI-GAP report, designed to increase representation of women in positions appointed by the governor.

The Governor was also joined at the event by female members of his staff and cabinet, as well as board and commission appointees, including former Secretary of State Susan Farmer, whom Governor Chafee appointed to the Rhode Island Board of Elections.

Currently, women hold 33% of board and commission appointments. Of the 462 board and commission appointments made by the Governor, 209 have been women. Four of the Governor’s seven senior staff members are female, as are seven of 22 cabinet directors.

“In 2010, women held approximately 15% of appointed positions in Rhode Island,” explains Marcia Coné, CEO of Women’s Fund of Rhode Island. “We launched RI-GAP at the time in order to ensure that more women are fairly represented in state government. I am delighted that Governor Chafee has kept his promise to more than



double the percentage of women appointed to boards and commissions, as well as high-level staff and cabinet positions in his administration.”

“I am pleased that, as Governor, I have been able to tilt the scales of state government closer to gender equality,” Governor Chafee said. “Some of the most talented and valuable members of my staff and cabinet are women, and I am grateful that a large number of committed Rhode Island women have agreed to serve our state on boards and commissions. However, I recognize that women are still severely under-represented in Rhode Island government and will continue working to achieve equal representation across all boards, commissions, and cabinet and senior staff positions.”

Prior to the 2010 gubernatorial election, the Women’s Fund posed a challenge to all six candidates: that in order to move toward political parity each would promise that should he become Governor, 50% of all appointed cabinet-level positions, boards, and commissions would be filled by women by 2014.

As part of the work by national initiative Vision 2020 (of which Women’s Fund of Rhode Island CEO Marcia Coné is a state delegate), RIGAP aims at ameliorating the gender inequity in Rhode Island government and was modeled after MassGAP, where many women who applied for and gained positions went on to run for state elected office. The RIGAP report calls on the state to develop a plan for tracking demographic data by EEOA, as required by law, to review expired appointments and vacancies on boards that have a disproportionate number of either men or women to create gender parity.

*The mission of Women’s Fund of Rhode Island is to invest in women and girls in our community through research, advocacy and grant making designed to eliminate gender inequity through systemic change.*