



Dear Voter:

My name is Linda Ujifusa and I am running to be your next State Senator for District 11 (Portsmouth and Bristol). I'm writing to introduce myself and ask for your vote in the September 13 Democratic primary and the November 8 general election.

I've lived in Portsmouth with my husband, J. Mark Ryan, MD, since 1993. When we were looking to put down permanent roots in Rhode Island, Mark's mom, Phyllis Ryan, a long time public school teacher in Middletown, recommended Portsmouth as a wonderful community with great public schools. She was right. Our three children, John, Katie and Jamie Ryan, thrived in Portsmouth.

When the children were young, my public service was limited to volunteering at my children's schools. As my kids grew up, I became involved with the Portsmouth Open Space Committee and the Aquidneck Land Trust, which were both trying to conserve and maintain our local open spaces.

When we first settled here, our neighbors included teachers, small business owners and retired military officers. We could buy locally grown produce; an apple orchard within walking distance sold freshly pressed apple cider. The kids could play with friends down the street and run to grandma's house for snacks.

Today, many people, especially seniors, cannot afford to stay in their homes. Housing prices have skyrocketed and made it impossible for young couples to buy homes in the towns in which they grew up. We are losing our farms and open spaces. We also face challenges—such as climate change and pandemics—that affect every one of us.

I believe that when we work together, we can overcome any challenge we face. Our local response to the COVID pandemic is a recent illustration. Faced with the challenges of COVID, town staffs, elected officials and volunteers from the community organized food banks, checked on and helped people who were alone and at-risk, and ran large vaccination clinics. Having volunteered at the Portsmouth and Bristol COVID vaccination clinics, I saw first-hand how dedicated, committed and successful we can be when we are united in a common purpose.

I am a third-generation Japanese-American. My grandparents immigrated to America in the 1920s and settled as farmers in Washington state and Wyoming. During WWII, my mother's family lost their farm when they were forced into the Tule Lake Internment Camp. My father, who enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor, served in the U.S. Army 191st Signal Corp. in the China Burma India theater. I was born in California, came to the Northeast for college, and with the exception of Mark's three years on the faculty of UCSF, we have lived here ever since.

I graduated from Harvard, received a law degree at New York University, and began my legal career at a Boston law firm, mainly working on business litigation. I switched from the private sector to the public sector, accepting a position at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), because I wanted to do work that served public interests. At the EPA, I was in the “superfund” division, working to make responsible parties pay to clean up severely contaminated sites.

Mark graduated from Brown Medical School and has been a practicing internist for over 35 years. In 2014, he became president of the RI Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program, a group that advocates for Medicare for All. I began helping to organize talks and draft state single payer legislation. Mark and I were gratified when the presidential campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders put a spotlight on single payer healthcare.

My introduction to politics was a local “Intro to Bernie” event. It was 2015, a year from the election, but more than 50 people were crammed into a small restaurant/bar even though the event wasn’t widely publicized. The host had no agenda, no sign up sheets, no prepared remarks, and no food; but what the host did have, for me, was an inspiring candidate and motivation to get more involved. I organized an “Intro to Bernie” pizza party, began knocking on doors and phone banking, and that eventually led to my run for public office.

Since I was first elected in 2016 to the Portsmouth Town Council, I’ve helped ensure that the town implemented fiscally responsible management of town services, assets and schools. I also helped secure safety audits of East Main and West Main roads, grants for climate change resiliency, including flood management in Common Fence Point and Island Park. I also helped make sure we could rebuild our Senior Center with about 50 affordable senior housing units, improve our Emergency Management procedures, and expand the Parks and Rec program. You can learn more about me at ujifusa4ri.com.

I want to know about your concerns and questions, so feel free to contact me at (401) 472-4721 or email lindaujifusa.ri@gmail.com.

Thank you for reading about me. I hope you can vote for me this September 13 in the Democratic primary and November 8 in the general election.

I look forward to meeting you soon!



Linda Ujifusa