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## MEDIA RELEASE – New Book

**Release Date: July 15, 2009**

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### **TEN THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT RHODE ISLAND by Tom Sgouros**

*Rhode Island is in a crisis! Oh, wait. You knew that already. But our Governor thinks there's a crisis, the Assembly thinks there's a crisis. Many other people do, too. Have you ever wondered why, since so many people agree, no one seems to be able to do anything about it?*

Light Publications is pleased to announce the release of **TEN THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT RHODE ISLAND** by Tom Sgouros, editor of *The Rhode Island Policy Reporter*, perhaps the most influential political newsletter in the Ocean State.

In **TEN THINGS**, Sgouros describes many of the breakdowns Rhode Island is in the midst of, and the "conventional tale" of how we got here—intransigent unions, greedy poor people, a tanking economy. But he also describes the reasons this conventional tale should be consigned to a conventional wastebasket—the unions aren't that powerful, the poor people aren't that expensive, and the economy isn't the real problem. Instead, Sgouros presents the real story about how we came to this pass—by making some very expensive choices, ignoring some important issues, and using some dramatically growing revenues to hide the real problems. This is fine while the growth lasts, but when the music stops... what then?

The ten things? You'll have to read the book to find them (and more). But here's a sample:

- Since the 1950's, we have built what amounts to an entire second state's worth of roads, bridges, schools and police stations. Yet the state's population is up only about 30% since that time.

- State and local taxes have actually *declined* since 1990, if you look at tax collections as a proportion of the total state economy, and don't counting the take from the lottery and video slots...
- When you combine the debt service paid from the Department of Transportation's budget, we now pay almost *\$100 million every year* in interest payments. (How does that make you feel about borrowing another \$40 million more next year?)
- Towns get less than half of the “municipal aid” in the state budget.
- Almost all the police hired in the past decade have been in the low-crime parts of the state. Many communities with higher crime rates have been forced to cut their police departments, while low-crime places added jobs.
- Salaries for professional white-collar jobs in Rhode Island are comparable to neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut, but blue-collar workers here are paid far less than for comparable jobs in our neighboring states.
- It wasn't very long ago that Providence was the richest community in the state.
- Illegal immigration is likely a net gain for the state government (in terms of revenue from taxes), and a loss for municipalities and school districts (in terms of expenses).

## TEN THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT RHODE ISLAND

### Details

Title:	Ten Things You Don't Know About Rhode Island
Author	Tom Sgouros
Expected publication date	July 7, 2009
ISBN	978-0-9824707-0-1
Number of pages	176, some charts and graphs
Price	\$14.00
Trim size	5.5x8.5 Perfect Bound (softcover)
Publisher	Light Publications
Distributors	Ingram, Baker and Taylor
Retail Availability	Local bookstores, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders
Photos and Samples	<a href="http://www.lightpublications.com/media">http://www.lightpublications.com/media</a>

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