

IDEAL
Sunny with less wind today and highs in the 50s; increasing clouds tonight.
Forecast, E16

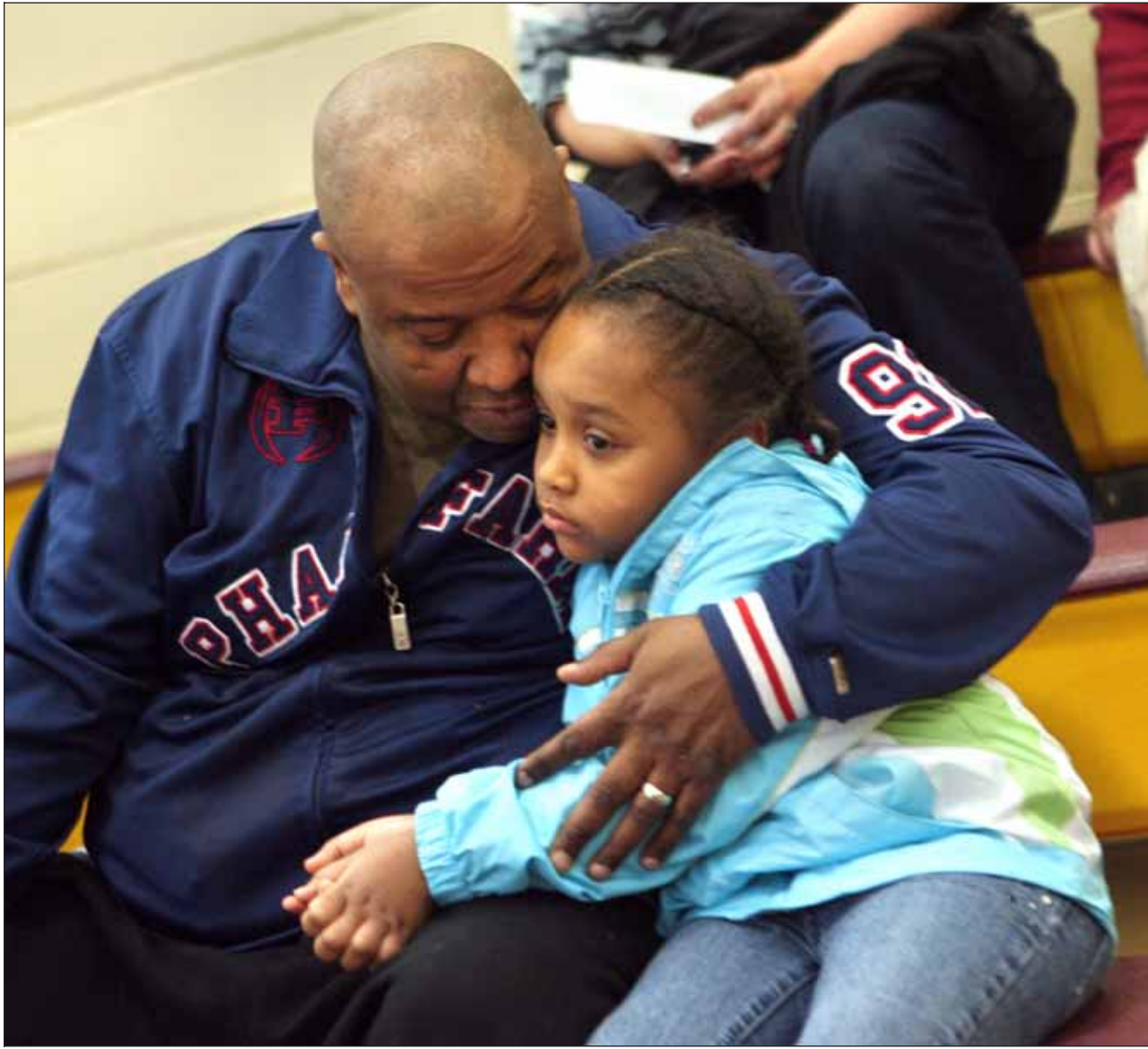
The Providence Journal

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CHARTER SCHOOL ADMISSIONS



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB THAYER

Yanevi Heredra, 5, is consoled by her father, Jose Heredra, after her name isn't called during yesterday's lottery for spots at Times² Academy, a Providence charter school.

Clergy decries Carciere's order on immigrants

"... the immigrants who are already in our state ... should not be persecuted, intimidated or harassed."

BISHOP THOMAS J. TOBIN

BY TOM MOONEY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — In an extraordinary show of unity, leaders of Rhode Island's religious community yesterday called on Governor Carciere to reconsider his executive order on illegal immigration, saying it threatened to ignite widespread vitriol against entire immigrant communities.

More than 40 clergy members from various religious denominations gathered outside the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul and applauded as Rabbi Alan Flam, president of Rhode Island's Board of Rabbis, denounced the governor's order as "a top-down, poorly conceived" policy that promised "discrimination against people of color and immigrants in Rhode Island."

Further, Rabbi Flam said, the order — designed, Carciere said, as a way of saving the money the state now spends on illegal immigrants — "comes with no data as to the cost to Rhode Island taxpayers and the impact on local law-enforcement agencies and businesses."

Among those applauding Rabbi Flam's remarks was the Most Rev. Thomas J. Tobin, leader of Rhode Island's Roman Catholics, who in his own prepared remarks stopped short of directly calling on Carciere to rescind his order.

But in speaking to reporters after the news conference, Bishop Tobin said: "I



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / MARY MURPHY

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Tobin, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence, speaks with Juan Garcia, an organizer in the Hispanic community.

would like the governor to look at this issue again very, very carefully and to study, to see if there is another way of accomplishing the goals he has in mind."

Bishop Tobin went on: "An executive order like this ... causes a lot of fear"

SEE **CLERGY, A7**

Luck of the draw

Anxious parents learn whether their children will win spots in the state's increasingly popular charter schools.

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Your turn: Do you think Rhode Island needs more charter schools? Why or why not? To respond, and for more on charter schools in Rhode Island, go to projo.com

BY JENNIFER D. JORDAN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Lottery Day in the state's public charter schools yesterday brought anxiety and hope to thousands of families waiting to hear whether their children would be among the lucky ones. At Paul Cuffee Charter School, the lottery unfolded in a low-key manner.

A handful of school administrators sat around a table in a second-floor conference room, picking names from a bright green bowl. More than 200 thin bits of paper — each with the name of a student vying for one of just 25 open kindergarten slots — were tossed in the bowl like lettuce leaves. Head of school David Bourns carefully



Roberto and Yolania Estevez celebrate after their son, Geremy, 5, wins a spot at Times² Academy.

SEE **CHARTER, A9**

Fed chief portrays grim outlook for the economy

In his most pessimistic statement yet, Ben S. Bernanke tells Congress that the nation is very likely already in a recession.

BY NEIL IRWIN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke acknowledged yesterday for the first time that the United States may be in a recession, projecting that the economy could shrink during the first half of this year.

"It now appears likely that [inflation-adjusted] gross domestic product will not grow much, if at all, over the first half of 2008 and may contract slightly," Bernanke told the Congressional Joint Economic Committee.

In response to a question, he added that

"a recession is possible" — a rare use of the R-word by a Fed chairman. Fed leaders traditionally worry about giving markets a reason for pessimism.

Bernanke's comments marked a notable shift in tone, reflecting continued soft economic data and a view that the breakdown in financial markets poses a rising threat to the economy as a whole. Just more than a month ago, Bernanke said he expected "sluggish economic activity" but made no mention of a possible contraction.

SEE **ECONOMY, A8**

Relocation to allow return of a pre-Route 195 look

Providence streets that had all but disappeared may be restored under the new city-state partnership.

BY DANIEL BARBARISI
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The new Providence that is created when Route 195 is stripped away will look much like the old Providence: the 1937 version.

Once the highway is gone, the city plans to re-create the near-exact road network that existed before the highway plowed through the city's Jewelry District. Streets that are chopped

up, such as Chestnut and Clifford streets, will be made whole, and some that barely exist now, such as Claverick Street, will be reborn into a pedestrian-friendly grid of city blocks.

"One of the earliest decisions made was that in reconnecting the city we were going to re-create the historic street patterns," said Providence Planning Director

SEE **LAND, A9**

Bill would create marijuana dispensaries

Sen. Rhoda E. Perry, D-Providence, is cosponsor of legislation that would help patients entitled to medical marijuana obtain the drug.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / **CONNIE GROSCH**

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Your turn: What do you think of this idea? To respond, and to read more about Rhode Islanders who use marijuana for medical reasons, go to projo.com



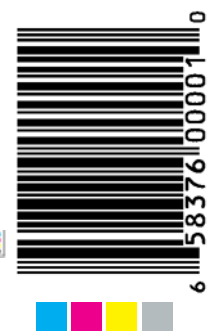
BY CYNTHIA NEEDHAM
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — A year after passing permanent medical marijuana legislation, lawmakers say it's time to establish a safe and legal means for patients to obtain the drug.

Right now, qualifying patients may grow marijuana, but since the state provides no access to the drug, they often resort to buying it on the street.

Legislators and doctors call that scenario an unwanted weak link in an otherwise successful law. They've heard too many stories like that of Warwick's Buddy Coolen, 29, a medical marijuana user who three months ago was robbed at gunpoint by the drug dealer while

SEE **CENTERS, B2**



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NARROWING THE SEARCH

A search committee looking for a new president for Rhode Island College narrows its selection to four candidates. **B1**

INFORMATION UNDER WRAPS

Regulators agree to a request by the state's three cable TV companies to keep secret some of the details of their business operations, such as the number of customers each firm serves. **F1**

A CHANGE OF POWER

Results show Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe's long-ruling party has lost its parliamentary majority and an opposition candidate claims to have won the presidential race as well. **A2**



RED SOX SHUT OUT OAKLAND

Jon Lester, left, gives up three hits in 6 2/3 innings and David Ortiz blasts a two-run homer as the Red Sox beat Oakland, 5-0, to complete a two-game sweep. **C1**