



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## EPI Board Elects New Chair, adds two New Board Members



Providence, RI [November 2, 2018] – The Economic Progress Institute is pleased to announce that current board member Carolyn Mark, a longtime policy advocate and current chair of the East Greenwich school committee, has been elected Chair of the Institute's Board of Directors. Mark takes over for Lisa Roth Blackman, Chief Development Officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank who has served as the chair for the last three years and who will continue to serve on the EPI board.

"We are extremely thankful to Lisa for her commitment to the Institute over the years and are excited to have Carolyn take the helm. Lisa and Carolyn worked closely together this year to update [our strategic plan](#) which commits the organization to continuing our work to improve economic security and opportunity for Rhode Islanders, and to helping to grow and sustain the organization," said Rachel Flum, executive director of the Institute.

"We are pleased to welcome two new board members who have worked with the Institute over the past decade to further our mission of improving economic security and opportunity for Rhode Islanders" said Carolyn Mark, board chair of the Institute. "Paola and Jill have worked with Institute staff on health care and economic security policies at the state house and in coalition work. We are excited to have their experience on our board."

As Director of Grants, Research, and Evaluation, for the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice at Bridgewater State University, Jill Beckwith supports the implementation, evaluation, and funding of social justice initiatives for students, faculty, and staff at BSU. Previously, Jill worked at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT where, between 2003-2017, she served as Policy Analyst, Senior Policy Analyst, and Deputy Director. She provided leadership and management for child and family policy and advocacy programs and publications, with a special focus on health coverage and health care access. Jill has served as the Co-Chair of the Rhode Island Oral Health Commission, Co-Director of the Rhode Island Health Coverage Project and Project Director of the TeethFirst! initiative.





As the new Vice President of Community Development for Centreville Bank, Paola Fernandez's years of experience in the non-profit and government relations sectors of our state is unparalleled. Her strength in relationship building in the community and cross cultural approach to advocacy and coalition-building is an asset to any organization. Previously, Paola worked as Assistant Vice President of Community Development at Pawtucket Credit Union and before that served 16 years as a Program Manager and later

Director of Public Policy and Government Relations at the United Way of Rhode Island. She presently holds various positions as a board member at the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Rhode Island and the Association of Argentinians in Rhode Island. She has previously served on the board of the Latino Policy Institute, Housing Works Rhode Island, and Community Schools Rhode Island.

#### **About The Economic Progress Institute**

The Economic Progress Institute is a nonpartisan research and policy organization dedicated to improving the economic well-being of low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders. For more information visit [www.economicprogressri.org](http://www.economicprogressri.org).