



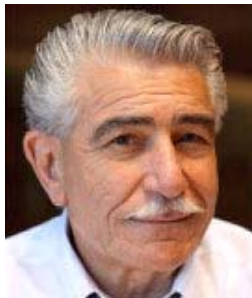
## Providence

# DeLuca's ascendancy may signal change on council

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Councilman Joseph  
DeLuca

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PROVIDENCE — Longtime City Councilman Joseph DeLuca has been elevated to council leadership and named a deputy majority leader, a sign that the factional lines that defined the first year of Mayor David N. Cicilline's second term may be breaking down, some say.

DeLuca was a deputy majority leader for eight years under previous City Council President John J. Lombardi, who was a staunch Cicilline foe. When Cicilline's second term began in January 2007, and five new council members were elected, Cicilline ally Peter S. Mancini was elected council president, ousting Lombardi.

But the eight-member Mancini majority was held by one tenuous vote on the 15-member, all-Democratic council; DeLuca was in the seven-member Lombardi minority.

Depending on who you ask, DeLuca's elevation is either evidence that Cicilline has locked down the council with nine sure votes, or that the factional lines are disappearing. DeLuca believes it's the latter.

"I work for the people. I'm not into this power-bloc [stuff]. If it's the right thing to do, fine, if it's the wrong thing to do, no. I don't care who's on whose side. I'm like the umpire; I call it like I see it."

The 17-year councilman said that the introduction of so much new blood on the council has changed the old ways, where all that mattered was having an eight-vote majority.

“That system used to be so dominant in here, it was sickening. Right or wrong, we’ve got eight [votes], that’s it, they would railroad it through. But it shouldn’t be that way,” he said.

“Some of it will always linger on. I think guys like [Nicholas] Narducci, Leon Tejada, Seth [Yurdin], the new guys, Cliff [Wood], they’re pretty much open-minded. If you’ve got an issue, and it’s valid, then never mind the voting block — you can talk to them, and they’ll make a decision based on the issue. I like that. I’ve been looking for that for the last 17 years,” DeLuca said.

DeLuca said that he asked for the position. He is now one of three deputy majority leaders, with Tejada and Wood. As a deputy majority leader, DeLuca will participate in the important leadership sessions before meetings, and will assist in moving the council docket forward by introducing and seconding motions.

The council’s most prominent members right now are the triumvirate of Mancini, Majority Leader Terrence M. Hassett and Finance Chairman John J. Igliazzi.

Hassett, who pushes most legislation along during council meetings, sits next to DeLuca, and said he elevated him because of his experience and his grasp of council rules.

“He’s like a verbal Robert’s Rules of Order,” Hassett said. “We discuss issues that are on the floor. He’s even-tempered, he’s extremely fair. I thought it would be a good addition.”

He acknowledged that he was conscious of DeLuca’s role in Lombardi’s presidency, but said that those old lines have slackened.

“That’s why I think the factions are gone,” he said. “Everyone is working I think, together, in everybody’s interests.

“I think things have settled down, which is good because now we have everybody working on positive things, together.”

Lombardi said that it’s clear who’s in charge of the council, and who has shaped it: Cicilline.

“The mayor controls the council now. Did the mayor interfere? Absolutely. Was he an officious intermeddler? Absolutely,” he said.

But he said he doubted that DeLuca would become a sure vote for Cicilline’s proposals.

“I think Joe’s on a case-by-case basis,” he said.

DeLuca’s respect from other council members, rather than any pledges he has made to the mayor or to Hassett, may be the reason for his elevation, Lombardi said. “I think this was more out of respect and courtesy to Joe.”

At the end of the day, Lombardi said, he believes he could count on DeLuca’s support if he needed it.

“I think Joe has always been a good supporter of mine. I think Joe supports me,” Lombardi said.

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