



William (Bill) O'Brien (South Africa)

Rhode Island House of Representatives 54th District

Election Date: Nov 3, 2026

Official website:

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/representatives/obrien/>

Representative William (Bill) W. O'Brien has represented North Providence's District 54 in the Rhode Island House of Representatives since 2012. He currently serves as Deputy Majority Leader, chairs the House Finance Committee's Public Safety Subcommittee and the Permanent Joint Committee on State Lottery, and serves as First Vice Chair of the House Corporations Committee and House Rules Committee.

Before entering the General Assembly, Representative O'Brien spent 20 years as a mathematics teacher in the Providence public school system and later served as a truancy officer. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Rhode Island College and has also studied at Providence College, the University of Rhode Island, and Florida International University.

Representative O'Brien served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in South Africa from 1998 to 2000. He has also been involved in his local community as a North Providence Jets youth football coach for 12 years.

During his tenure in the Rhode Island House, Representative O'Brien has sponsored legislation addressing a range of issues, including public education, educator shortages, safe drinking water, animal welfare, and public safety. His legislative work has included establishing dual-enrollment opportunities for Rhode Island students, creating a program to replace lead water service lines, and supporting measures to help address the state's shortage of educators.

In 2025, Representative O'Brien sponsored legislation addressing animal welfare, including measures prohibiting the declawing of cats except when medically necessary and strengthening penalties for animal abuse. He also sponsored legislation expanding opportunities for retired teachers to serve as substitute educators and requiring certain public-facility personnel to receive training in administering opioid antagonists such as Narcan.

Representative O'Brien is a longtime public servant whose career has spanned education, community service, the Peace Corps, and state government