



SMITH HILL REPORT

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2009 marks the twelfth consecutive year that the RIFTHP has published a newsletter during the legislative session of the Rhode Island General Assembly. The Smith Hill Report will be published regularly until the session closes this summer. The newsletter is designed to provide basic information on legislation of interest to the RIFTHP membership and will provide summaries of testimony offered by the Union on important bills.

The Smith Hill Report is published in both print and electronic form. Questions about the distribution of the SHR should be directed to Kenn Fontaine at RIFTKenn@aol.com (or at 273-9800). Questions about specific legislation should be directed to RIFTHP Field Representative and lobbyist James Parisi at riftjim@aol.com or by calling him at 273-9800.

The next two issues of the SHR will contain lists of all Senators and Representatives with their contact information. Please keep these handy as you will want to contact your own representatives during this coming session. All issues of the SHR are available online at www.rifthp.org.

Session Opens January 6

The General Assembly will convene on Tuesday January 6th to face the growing fiscal deficit caused by less than projected state revenue and greater than expected state spending.

The Senate leadership will change due to Senate President Joseph Montalbano losing his reelection bid. Senator Teresa Paiva-Weed is expected to become Senate President.

The Assembly welcomes seven new Senators and sixteen new Representatives. The Republican caucus of the Assembly has continued to shrink. Only 4 of the 38 Senators are Republican (not counting Independent Edward O'Neil). Last year there were 5 Republican Senators. The House Republican caucus shrunk from 14 to 6 out of 75 members, constituting a mere 8% of the legislative body!

Causes for Concern

The opening days of the General Assembly session may be unusually active as state lawmakers grapple with the daunting task of balancing the current fiscal year budget. The State's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. We are mid-way through the current fiscal year and the projected deficit is over \$360 million. Since the fiscal year is half over, to balance this year's budget, lawmakers will have to cut spending or increase revenues in an amount equal to \$2 million/day if the changes are voted on during the first days of the session.

Of particular concern to RIFTHP members is the increased talk of pension cuts to balance the state budget and offset revenue lost as investments fell. There will be continued efforts to limit the scope of bargaining, especially as it relates to preventing negotiations of health benefits. Severe budget cuts to agencies providing services to youth, the elderly, sick and disabled will impact those who receive services as well as the job security for those who provide services.

Election Recap

The RIFTHP was active in the Presidential race, 3 Congressional races, and worked on 55 General Assembly races. The Union endorsed 36 candidates running for the House of Representatives in either the Primary or General Election. The RIFTHP-endorsed candidates all won except for incumbent Representative Raymond Church and Independent Matthew Pion who challenged Democrat Douglas Gablinske.

The RIFTHP worked on 19 Senate races, with only two candidates (Senate President Montalbano and Democrat Lawrence Signore) losing their races.

In all, the RIFTHP maintained a high level of activity around its endorsements. Approximately 150 union members volunteered to make 12,500 phone calls, knock on doors, and send postcards to help endorsed candidates. 31 volunteers took the "Obama Express" bus to knock on union member doors in New Hampshire. 25,000 endorsement letters were sent out by the union.

The following is a list of all endorsed candidates who won his/her election. An asterisk notes those 8 endorsed candidates who had neither a Primary race nor a General Election race.

House

D-1 John McCauley (Providence)	D-34 David Caprio (Narr, SK)
D-2 David Segal (Prov, E Prov)	D-35 Michael Rice (South Kingston)
D-5 John DeSimone (Providence)	D-36 Donna Walsh (Charl, SK, Westerly)
D-6 Peter Wasylyk (Prov, N Prov)*	D-41 Michael Marcello (Crans, Sci)
D-7 Joanne Giannini (Providence)	D-42 Stephen Ucci (Crans, Johnston)*
D-9 Anastasia Williams (Providence)	D-43 Deborah Fellela (Johnston)
D-11 Grace Diaz (Providence)	D-44 Peter Petrarca (Linc, John, Smith)
D-13 John Carnevale (Providence)*	D-45 Rene Menard (Linc, Cumb)
D-14 Charlene Lima (Cranston)	D-46 MaryAnn Shallcross Smith (Lincoln)
D-16 Peter Palumbo (Cranston)	D-51 Christopher Fierro (Woonsocket)
D-17 Robert Jacquard (Cranston)	D-52 Karen MacBeth (Cumberland)
D-18 Arthur Handy (Cranston)	D-53 Thomas Winfield (Smith, Gloc)
D-22 Frank Ferri (Warwick)	D-58 William San Bento (Pawt, N Prov)*
D-23 Robert Flaherty (Warwick)	D-59 Patrick O'Neill (Pawtucket)
D-28 Scott Guthrie (Coventry)	D-63 Roberto DaSilva (E Prov, Pawt)
D-29 Raymond Sullivan (Cov, W G)	D-70 John Edwards (Tiv, Ports)*
D-33 Donald Lally (SK, NK, Narr)	D-72 Amy Rice (Ports, Newport, Mdltn)

Senate

D-1 Maryellen Goodwin (Providence)	R-21 Leo Blais (Sci, Fost, Cov)
D-2 Juan Pichardo (Providence)	D-22 John Tassoni (Smith, N Prov)
D-4 Dominick Ruggiero (Providence)	D-25 Christopher Maselli (Johnston) *
D-5 Paul Jabour (Providence)*	D-26 Beatrice Lanzi (Cranston)
D-6 Harold Metts (Providence)	D-27 Hanna Gallo (Cranston)*
D-7 Frank Ciccone (Providence)	D-28 Joshua Miller (Cranston, Warwick)
D-12 Louis DiPalma (Npt, Tiv, Mdltn, LC)	D-31 Erin Lynch (Warwick)
D-16 Elizabeth Crowley (Pawt, Cumb, CF)	D-36 James Sheehan (N King, Narr)
D-18 Frank DeVall (East Providence)	