



SMITH HILL REPORT

RIFTHP Opposes Two Bills in House Labor Committee

- **Teacher / School Employee Binding Arbitration – Last Best Offer**

(H5142 Gemma, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would expand the scope of the binding arbitration process to include monetary issues for teachers and non-teacher educational employees. It would also include school staff in the binding arbitration process. On February 25, the RIFTHP testified against the bill arguing that the RIFTHP supports the right to strike. The RI School Committees' Association also opposed the bill. The NEA/RI testified in support of binding arbitration.

- **Teacher Strike / Work-to-Rule Prohibition**

(H5232 Gablinske, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would prohibit strikes by public school teachers and would provide for penalties for those teachers who violate this section. Work-to-rule actions would be considered illegal strikes. Also on February 25, the RIFTHP offered testimony in opposition to the bill. The union noted the impossibility of enforcing a work-to-rule prohibition. The NEA/RI and the ACLU also opposed the bill. The ACLU raised concerns about unconstitutional prohibitions on free speech, due process, and freedom of association. School Administrators and the Board of Regents Chair, Robert Flanders testified in support of the bill.

Bill Introductions **House Bills**

- **Delete Teacher Salary Step Statute**

(H5506 Williamson, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would eliminate the requirement that each community use a step system for paying public school teachers.

- **Teacher Tenure – March 1 Notification,**

(H5507 Williamson, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would eliminate the requirement that school districts notify a teacher that the teacher is not being rehired by March 1st

of the school year immediately preceding the school year in which the dismissal would become effective.

- **Teacher Contract Nullification – Funding Shortfall**

(H5508 Williamson, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide that collective bargaining agreements would be null and void in those instances where actual funds to the school committee and/or district fell short of the actual funding received by the committee and/or district.

Senate Bills

- **Suspension of Caruolo Actions**
(S0113 *Raptakis, Senate Finance*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would prohibit litigation under the Caruolo Act for the period from January 1, 2009 to January 1, 2014.
- **EFCA - Card Check**
(S0331 *Goodwin, Senate Labor*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would amend the Labor Relations Act to provide for a certified representative for collective bargaining by petition, mirroring the federal Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).
- **Automatic Contract Renegotiation – Line Item Overage**
(S0332 *Sosnowski, Senate Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would authorize certain actions, including, but not limited to, compulsory mediation, and require the filing of a statement of corrective action, when a school district's expenditures for any account exceed the statewide average for all districts by ten percent (10%) or greater.
- **Vacating Arbitration Awards**
(S0335 *McCaffrey, Senate Labor*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would acknowledge arbitration as the preferred alternative labor dispute resolution mechanism and limit instances when an arbitration award can be vacated.
- **Certification Advisory Board**
(S0349 *Maselli, Senate Education*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would amend the composition and the duties of the Rhode Island Certification Standards Board. It would change the status of the Policy Advisory Board on Teacher and Administrator Certification to the Policy Board on Teacher and Administrator Certification.
- **PSI – Noninterference with Collective Bargaining**
(S0350 *Jabour, Senate Education*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would provide that the intervention provisions of the Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative Act would not alter or affect rights or remedies of school employees provided under federal laws, State laws, local laws or collective bargaining agreements.
- **Teacher Layoff / Termination Notification Date**
(S0384 *DiPalma, Senate Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would amend the provisions regarding the dismissal, suspension, or lay-off of tenured teachers.
- **Budget Appropriation Reduction – Emergency Regulations**
(S0411 *Bates, Senate Finance*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would give the Governor authority to reduce or suspend appropriations in response to budget shortfalls and would also expand the Governor's authority relating to interfund transfers.
- **Mandatory 25% Co-share**
(S0444 *Bates, Senate Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide that no school or municipal employee collective bargaining agreement in effect as of January 1, 2009 would provide for an employee contribution of not less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the premium cost of health benefits.