



SMITH HILL REPORT

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Members Go To Capitol Hill

Pensions, healthcare, collective bargaining rights, the Governor's use of the Supplemental Budget to assault labor unions and their members and now, the economic stimulus package - these are the topics active members and retirees have been talking about with their legislators at the "Face-to-Face" meetings facilitated by the RIFTHP at the State House.

RIFTHP scheduled several meetings with legislators and their constituents, RIFTHP members, to talk about the problems facing the State and municipalities and about solutions being offered to address them.

Dozens of members from six local unions and the retiree chapter have met with their Representatives and Senators.

The following is a list of the meetings thus far:

Representative Joanne Giannini

Buddy Comet (West Warwick)
Earl Fenner (Pawtucket)
Don Izzo (Providence)
Scott Shepherd (Providence)

Representative Helio Melo

Ron Beaupre (Pawtucket)
Pat Beaupre (Pawtucket)
Kelly Bairos (Pawtucket)
Nicole McKay (Pawtucket)

Rep Nick Mattiello

Al Casali (Cranston)
Mark Colozzi (Cranston)
Tom Kelly (Cranston)
Bill Macera (Cranston)
Peter Buonfiglio (Cranston)
JoAnn Fede (Johnston)
Mary Lou Votto (Johnston)

Representative Gus Silva

Bill Vanasse (West Warwick)
Sarah Sellers (Central Falls)
Jessica Parkhurst (Central Falls)
Joanne Diggle (Central Falls)
Amy Joyce (Central Falls)
Noel Chartier (Central Falls)
Jane Sessums (Central Falls)

Representative Michael Marcello

Kathie Bouchard (8037 Retirees)
Kathy Torregrossa (Cranston)
Dawn Florenz (Cranston)
Jeff Petrarca (West Warwick)
Gail Deware (8037 Retirees)
Joann Silva (Coventry)
Helene Scola (Coventry)
Joe Fagnoli (Coventry)
Sue Toohey-Kaye (Coventry)

Representative Betsy Dennigan

Adele Facenda (Pawtucket)
Melissa Labossiere (Pawtucket)
Maureen Toth (Pawtucket)

Senator Leo Blais

Linda Cohen (Coventry)
Mary Vandervelde (Coventry)
Joe Szymkowicz (Coventry)
Mary Ellen Carlu (Coventry)
Steve Buteau (Coventry)
John Kelly (Coventry)
Kathy Sullivan (Coventry)
Arthur St. Jean (Coventry)

Senator Joshua Miller

Jessica Palumbo (Cranston)
Tricia McGovern (Cranston)
John Zolli (Cranston)
Meg Rankin (Cranston)
Brian Flinn (Cranston)
Chris Sparks (Cranston)

Meetings are being scheduled every week on an ongoing basis. To participate in a meeting, members should contact their local union or call the RIFTHP office at 273-9800.

Presidents Testify

RIFTHP local presidents arrived at the State House on Wednesday, March 18th, to testify on a series of anti-worker bills being heard in the House Labor Committee as well as one favorable bill being heard in the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee.

- **H5817 - Collective Bargaining Fiscal Impact Statements**

(Watson, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would require that collective bargaining fiscal impact statements be publicized on the city or town website for thirty (30) days prior to ratification.

John Maguire (President, North Providence Federation of Teachers) testified against the bill.

- **H5527 - Teacher Compensation – Merit Pay**
(Loughlin, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would weaken the statutory provisions of the salary step system. It also allows school committees to negotiate other means of compensation for teachers including, but not limited to, merit pay. **Jane Sessums** (President, Central Falls Teachers Union) testified against the bill.

- **H5878 - Demotion and Discharge of Teachers** *(Fox, House Labor)*

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would amend certain provisions relative to teachers' rights and duties including dismissal, demotion and layoff. **Marcia Reback** (President, RIFTHP) testified against the bill.

- **H5855 - RI Certification Standards Board**
(Lima, House Health, Education and Welfare)

The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would amend the duties of the Rhode Island Certification Standards Board. It would remove the status of advisory from the policy advisory board on teacher and administrator certification to the policy board on teacher and administrator certification. **Marcia Reback** (President, RIFTHP) testified in support of the bill.

Bill Introductions House Bills

- **School Committee Meeting Notice**

(H5139 Melo, House Judiciary)

(H5176 Serpa, House Judiciary)

(H5229 Shallcross-Smith, House Judiciary)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would amend the open meetings law by permitting school committees to satisfy the publication requirements regarding their meetings through publication on a website maintained by the school committee or by publication in a newspaper.

- **School Committee Meeting Notices**

(H5497 Hearn, House Judiciary)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would make public notice of school committee meetings in newspapers optional.

- **General Assembly – Elimination of Union Staff**

(H5510 Trillo, House Labor)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would prohibit General Assembly members, who are also employed by a government employees' union, from participating or voting on any legislation concerning government employees' rights or benefits.

- **School District Consolidation Commission**
(H5710 Ehrhardt, House Finance)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would establish the Rhode Island School Realignment Commission and the Rhode Island Municipal Public Safety and Public Works Realignment Commission, it would define the charge of each commission and would provide funding for the same.

- **Resolution to Study Teacher Compensation**

(H5724 Gablinski, House Health, Education and Welfare)

The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would direct the House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations to request the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to conduct a study of restructured performance-based teacher compensation systems that would provide incentives to teachers for developing their knowledge and instructional skills in order to improve student learning.