



# SMITH HILL REPORT

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## Members Go To Capitol Hill

RIFTHP scheduled several "Face-to-Face" 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.

Members from local unions and the retiree chapter have met with their Representatives and Senators.

The following is a list of the meetings since last reported:

### **Senator Walter Felag**

Dawn Dion (Providence)  
Daniel Pinckney (Woonsocket)  
Brian Cabral (Providence)  
KrisAnn Paradis (Lincoln)

### **Senator Louis DiPalma**

Kristen Jalbert (Lincoln)  
Christina Grimes (Warwick)  
Jason Brule (Pawtucket)  
Bonnie Harris (Pawtucket)  
Sarah Marion (Pawtucket)  
Andrea Mueller (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.

## Charter School Teacher Tenure, Pension and Prevailing Wage

On Tuesday, April 7, 2009, the RIFTHP testified *against* Article 7 of the FY 2010 Budget (H5963). The RIFTHP represents workers at three existing charter schools. The RIFTHP values and supports charter schools but objects to Governor Carcieri's Article 7.

Article 7 would permit charter school administrators, not the school staff, to waive prevailing wages, tenure and pension participation. This waiver of rights and benefits that was granted to prospective mayoral academy staff would be retroactively forced onto existing union and non-union charter school staff. Changing the rules for existing schools and staff is unnecessary and unfair.

Last year the Assembly permitted mayors to create new charter schools. The RIFTHP also testified:

### **Parallel School Districts**

Despite the constant talk in the General Assembly about school consolidation, the Legislators have set a path to create parallel school districts by allowing mayors to create new school districts in addition to existing school districts. While a multitude of legislators have talked about school regionalization and consolidation, the Assembly as a body is creating duplicative school districts. The RIFTHP asked the House Finance Committee if the State of Rhode Island is so flush with cash that they can afford to create new school districts this year?

### **Charter School Funding**

If mayors want to open new school districts, the RIFTHP believes that the Assembly should change the charter school funding law to require that local funding for mayoral academies come from the municipal budget of a city or town, and not the school committee budget.

It is unfair to require school committees that are already struggling to balance budgets, to fund students attending schools created by city/town governments.

# Bill Introductions

## Senate Bills

- **Teacher Strike Prohibition**  
(S0658 Bates, Senate 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. The bill defines a “work to rule” action a strike.
- **Elimination of Teacher Professional Development Funding**  
(S0679 Raptakis, Senate Finance)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would eliminate the requirement for a State funded Professional Development Investment for RI Teachers.
- **Caruolo Action Elimination**  
(S0682 Doyle, Senate Labor)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would repeal those provisions of section 16-2-21.4 which permits a school committee to seek additional appropriations by bringing an action in Superior Court seeking more funding from a city or town.
- **Scope of Bargaining – Staffing - State Workers**  
(S0693 Blais, Senate Labor)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would exempt the State from any arbitration decision pertaining to the imposition of mandates on the state requiring minimum staffing levels, the deployment of personnel while on the job and types of equipment utilized by the State.
- **Elected Board of Regents**  
(S0698 Gallo, Senate Constitutional and Regulatory Issues)  
(S0699 Gallo, Senate Constitutional and Regulatory Issues)  
The RIFTHP **supports** these acts which would provide for an elected Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education.
- **Continuing Contracts – Teacher Collective Bargaining**  
(S0713 Perry, Senate Labor)  
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would amend section 28-9.3-9 to provide that if a successor collective bargaining agreement has not been agreed to by the parties, then the terms and conditions of the old teachers contract would remain in full force and effect until a new agreement is reached.
- **Scope of Collective Bargaining – Schools – Managements Rights**  
(S0729 Blais, Senate Education)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would codify and set forth certain non-delegable management authority of school committees, preventing unions from bargaining class size, evaluations, transfers, etc. This act would take effect upon passage, but would not invalidate the provisions of any collective bargaining contracts and/or agreements in effect as of the effective date of this act.
- **Faculty and College Excellence Act**  
(S0730 Miller, Senate Education)  
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would require that, by 2015, 75% of all classes taught at each public institution of higher education be taught by full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty. Academic departments with less than 8 full-time equivalent faculty positions would be exempt.
- **Statewide Purchasing – Health Insurance, Transportation**  
(S0733 Blais, Senate Finance)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would repeal the statewide purchasing system as it currently stands and would institute a new statewide purchasing system for municipalities and regional school districts including the purchasing of health insurance.
- **School – Municipality Budget Disputes**  
(S0744 Blais, Senate Finance)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide that if State aid to education of general revenue sharing is revealed or suspended, then school budget compliance with the provisions of the Carulo Act would be suspended for that year. The Governor would create a three (3) member panel to create a budget remedy.
- **Voter Initiative**  
(S0769 Cote, Senate Constitutional and Regulatory Issues)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide a detailed process by which a proponent of a voter initiative and referendum proposal would present the proposal to the Secretary of State, the General Assembly and the Governor.