



SMITH HILL REPORT

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Assembly on Hiatus

The Rhode Island General Assembly finished most but not all of its work this past week. In past years, the House and Senate have worked together passing a flurry of bills on the last days of the session at which time both chambers adjourn for the year. This year, the Senate went home Friday night after sending the Budget to

the Governor for his signature. The House of Representatives continued passing bills until 1:00 Saturday morning. The Senate came back to pass some bills on Tuesday, June 30. There is a strong possibility that the Assembly will come back to do additional bills one day in late July.

Continuing Contract Legislation Stalled

The House of Representatives finished its business early Saturday morning, June 27, without acting on **Senator Rhoda Perry's bill (S 713)** to provide that provisions of teacher contracts continue upon the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement until a new contract is negotiated. The bill adds the following provision into the teacher collective bargaining law:

(f) In the event that a successor collective bargaining agreement has not been agreed to by the parties, then the existing contract shall continue in effect until such time as an agreement has been reached between the parties.

The **Rhode Island Association of School Committees**, the **League of Cities and Towns**, the **Board of Regents** and the **Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council** all testified in **opposition** to the bill. Conservative talk radio and the **RI Shoreline Coalition** are conducting a grassroots campaign to kill the legislation.

It is important that Representatives hear from you that preserving contract provisions until a new contract is in place merely preserves the status quo; and the preservation of the status quo benefits neither labor nor management in the long run. Additionally, legislators need to appreciate that the bill merely puts into State law the precedent that was set by the RI State Labor Relations Board in a 1992 Warwick case that provided contract provisions to continue until a new contract is agreed upon by the parties.

RIFTHP Leaders Meet Congressman Langevin

AFT's position on national healthcare reform: specifically not taxing employer healthcare benefits like income and requiring quality staffing standards in healthcare facilities was the main topic at a meeting between the RIFTHP and **Congressman James Langevin**.

Presidents **Marcia Reback**, RIFTHP; **Frank Flynn**, Cranston Teachers' Alliance; and **Roger Boudreau**, R.I. AFT/Retirees; along with **Lizbeth Larkin**,

Cranston Teachers' Alliance Vice President; **Marie Drumm**, West Warwick Teachers' Alliance Political Director and **Maureen Martin**, RIFTHP Director of Political Activities, met with the Congressman on July 1st in his Warwick office.

Also discussed was the status of the Employees' Free Choice Act (EFCA) and the importance of this bill for the private and public employee unions.

RIFTHP Leaflets House

The RIFTHP, for the three days leading up to the House Budget vote, had union members handing out flyers listing the RIFTHP's concerns about Budget Articles 3 & 7. The first listed possible amendments to Article 7 that would soften the impact of the pension changes. The second concerned funding of Charter Schools and the Mayoral Academy while funding for public school districts is being cut by \$5.8 million. The third focused on the effects and ramifications the proposed Pension changes would have on teachers and state workers. Below is a list of the RIFTHP members who volunteered their time to try and effect change at the State House:



Lobby Day, Thurs., June 18

Patricia Rocha (Pawtucket)
 Charleen Christy (Pawtucket)
 Ron Beaupre (Pawtucket)
 Amy Dufault-Thompson (Pawtucket)
 Dayna Ferrara (Central Falls)
 Mia Godbout (Central Falls)
 Theresa Swift (Warwick)
 Mary Chisholm (Warwick)
 Andrea Sharkey (Warwick)
 Beverlee Powell (Warwick)
 Jeff Miner (Warwick)
 Janet Labrecque (Howard)

Lobby Day, Tues., June 23

Patricia D'Alfonso (W. Warwick)
 Bill Izzi (W. Warwick)
 Sean Doyle (W. Warwick)
 Mary Murray (Pawtucket)
 Ron Beaupre (Pawtucket)
 Frank Laliberte (Pawtucket)
 Karen Langlais (Central Falls)
 Audrey Kilsey (Central Falls)
 Ashley Ellsworth (Lincoln)

Lobby Day, Wed., June 24

Ron Beaupre (Pawtucket)
 Laurie Batek (N. Providence)
 Shari Fascitelli (N. Providence)
 Elissa Hogan (N. Providence)
 Christina Rosa Volpe (N. Providence)

Bills on the Move

The following bills have passed the House and Senate and are awaiting transmittal to the Governor

- **Voters Registration – Pre-registration of persons 16 - 17 years old (H5005 Pacheco)**
 The RIFTHP supports this act which would authorize persons sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) years of age who pre-register to vote to automatically be registered upon reaching age eighteen (18).
- **After School and Summer Learning Program (H5802 Fox – S0954 Paiva-Weed)**
 This act would require the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to begin planning a model after school and summer learning program that meets high quality standards.
- **Driver Education – Course for Parents / Guardians (S0459 Tassoni)**
 This act would provide for a voluntary course of instruction for parents or guardians relative to the content of the driver education curriculum.
- **Uniform School Donation Program (S0944aa Gallo – H6276 Mattiello)**
 This act would allow school districts, school departments and school committees to accept grants, gifts and donations from individuals, entities and governmental subdivisions for such purposes as specified by the donor and to keep such funds in a restricted-receipt, interest-bearing account until expended.