



SMITH HILL REPORT

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Groundhog Day

On Tuesday, February 2, also known as Groundhog Day, Governor Carcieri introduced his Fiscal Year 2011 Budget. The proposals are exceptionally familiar, mirroring proposals made in this year's Supplemental Budget plan and past State Budgets. Governor Carcieri's FY 2011 budget proposals are reminiscent of the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, in which Bill Murray was forced to experience the same day again and again and again.

Instead of finding real solutions to the budget crisis, the Governor maintained his seven-year course of action putting forth a Budget that hurt working people and passed the buck to cities, towns and school districts. He did so while maintaining unaffordable tax breaks for rich people in the income tax provision known as the flat tax.

Next week's Smith Hill Report will contain a more detailed listing of all of the budget proposals. The lowlights of his budget plan are:

- Elimination of pension COLA's for all State workers and teachers not eligible to retire as of September 30, 2009
- Cuts in municipal worker pension benefits
- Major funding cuts in aid to cities and towns
- Doubling the corporate tax break for businesses that donate to private and parochial schools
- Cuts in education aid to school districts
- Increased money for charter schools to expand
- Funding for new charter schools, expanding the State's largest unfunded education mandate

Prior Testimony

The RIFTHP has testified on several bills and budget proposals. Among the recent hearings, the RIFTHP:

- Opposed the expansion of management's rights through statute that would prevent teachers' unions from negotiating class size provisions, discipline and assignments of teachers. **John Maguire**, President of the North Providence Federation of Teachers also testified against the bill (H 7091) which has been introduced annually by North Providence Rep. Arthur Corvese. Rep. Corvese is Chair of the House Labor Committee, where the hearing was held on January 19.
- Opposed changing the notification date for teacher terminations from March 1 to June 1 of every year. The RIFTHP argued that tenured teachers need time to appeal termination decisions and that extending the time period for termination notices unnecessarily limits teacher rights. That bill (H 7093) was also sponsored by Rep. Corvese and was heard in the House Labor Committee on January 19.
- Asked to add a labor representative to a proposed study commission to review the operations of Channel 36, Rhode Island's public television station. RIFTHP Local 2012 represents workers at the station who have an obvious interest in the study of the television station's programs. The Study Commission (H 7056) was introduced by Rep. Eileen Naughton and was heard in the House Constituent Affairs Committee on January 27.

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