



# SMITH HILL REPORT

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## Supplemental Budget In Flux COLA Reduction On Hold

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, April 14, the House approved the COLA reductions proposed by the House Finance Committee. The COLA would be capped at the first \$35,000 of pension benefits, indexed to the consumer price index or 3%, whichever is lower. The proposal also included a provision to pay the COLA at age 65, or three years from retirement, whichever is later. These changes only apply to those not eligible to retire upon passage of the bill.

Before the House voted on the passage of Article 16, which contained the COLA cut, the House defeated amendments to eliminate the COLA for new hires submitted by Rep. Schadone and to cap the COLA at the first \$12,000 of income submitted by Rep. Trillo. Below is the final vote on Article 16. A Right vote is a vote to oppose passage of Article 16. Some of those who opposed Article 16 did so because the cut was not onerous enough to teachers and state workers.

Later that day, the Senate objected to the provision that re-amortized the unfunded pension liability, pushing the debt into the future at the cost of \$2.2 billion over a 25-year period. The Senate voted to amend the Supplemental Budget bill and send it back to the House. The budget is now in flux as the House and Senate must reconcile their differences. The proposal to eliminate city/town council ratification of school contracts was removed by the House. That issue, along with a potential statutory cost-share for medical insurance, will likely be debated as the House and Senate meet to pass a Supplemental Budget bill in the next few weeks. In addition, there will be reconsideration of the COLA cap, municipal aid, and "tools" to help cities and towns manage state aid reductions.

<b>W</b> Rep. Ajello (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Fierro (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Marcello (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. San Bento (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Almeida (D)	- Rep. Flaherty (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Martin (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Savage (R)
<b>R</b> Rep. Azzinaro (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Fox (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Mattiello (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Schadone (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Baldelli-Hunt (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Gablinske (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. McCauley (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Segal (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Brien (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Gallison (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. McNamara (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Serpa (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Caprio (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Gemma (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Melo (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Shallcross (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Carnevale (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Giannini (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Menard (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Silva (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Carter (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Guthrie (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Messier (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Slater (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Coderre (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Handy (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Murphy (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Sullivan (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Corvese (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Hearn (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Naughton (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Trillo (R)
<b>W</b> Rep. Costantino (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Jackson (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Newberry (R)	<b>A</b> Rep. Ucci (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. DaSilva (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Jacquard (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. O'Neill (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Vaudreuil (D)
<b>A</b> Rep. DeSimone (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Kennedy (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Pacheco (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Walsh (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Diaz (D)	<b>re</b> Rep. Kilmartin (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Palumbo (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Wasylyk (D)
<b>W</b> Rep. Driver (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Lally (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Petrarca (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Watson (R)
<b>W</b> Rep. Edwards (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Lima (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Pollard (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Williams (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Ehrhardt (R)	<b>R</b> Rep. Loughlin (R)	<b>W</b> Rep. A. Rice (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Williamson (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Fellela (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. MacBeth (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. M. Rice (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Winfield (D)
<b>R</b> Rep. Ferri (D)	<b>R</b> Rep. Malik (D)	<b>W</b> Rep. Ruggiero (D)	

(**R** - Right Vote, **W** - Wrong Vote, - - Not Voting, **ab** - Abstain, **A** - Absent, **re** - Recused)

## **RIFTHP Members Swarm the State House**

In a great show of solidarity with other public sector unions, over one hundred RIFTHP local union members came to the State House after school on Monday and Tuesday, April 12 and 13.

Wearing RIFTHP armbands, members talked to their State Representatives and passed out flyers on Monday as the legislators were heading into a caucus to talk about the Supplemental Budget.

On Tuesday, as legislators were heading into the House session to vote on the Supplemental Budget, union members took the opportunity to talk to their Representatives one more time.

"**VOTE NO ON ARTICLE 16**" and "**KEEP THE COLA**" were the messages on both days.

## **Bill Introductions** **Senate Bills**

- **Public Employee 25% Cost-Share**  
(**S2512 Cote, Senate Constitutional and Regulatory Issues**)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would require all State and local public employees to pay twenty-five percent (25%) of the premium costs of health care and dental benefits in any collective bargaining agreement executed with an effective date on or after April 1, 2010, or any extension effective after April 1, 2010.
- **Definition of Vesting**  
(**S2384 Ruggiero, Senate Labor**)  
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would define "active member" and "vested" as it applies to members of the State Retirement System.
- **PSI – Noninterference with Collective Bargaining**  
(**S2479 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.
- **West Warwick Mandate Relief**  
(**S2466 Pinga, Senate Finance**)  
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would relieve the Town of West Warwick from the operation of any statute or regulation imposing upon any department or instrumentality of said Town of West Warwick any requirements or mandated action, the full cost of which is not also paid by the State.
- **Vacating Arbitration Awards**  
(**S2684 McCaffrey, Senate Labor**)  
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would acknowledge arbitration as the preferred alternative labor dispute resolution mechanism and would limit instances when an arbitration award can be vacated.
- **Public Sector Card Check**  
(**S2566 Goodwin, Senate Labor**)  
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would authorize the Labor Board to certify and recognize union representatives of public employees that submit authorization cards signed by at least seventy percent (70%) of its eligible employee members. It would empower the Labor Board to investigate and prosecute coercion used to influence the outcome of controversy as to union representation.