



SMITH HILL REPORT

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BUDGET DELIBERATIONS POSTPONED

The House and Senate have not yet come to agreement on a Supplemental Budget bill to balance the current fiscal year budget, which is \$220 million in the red. The House had passed a budget plan which included both a \$35,000 income cap on pension COLA's for teachers and State workers not eligible to retire upon passage of the act and a re-amortization of the unfunded pension liability.

The Senate did not disagree with the COLA cap, but rejected the re-amortization of the unfunded pension liability. They noted that by re-amortizing the unfunded pension liability, the total cost to the State over a 25-year time span is \$2.2 billion. There would be short-term savings but significant long-term costs. The Senate amended the Supplemental Budget bill to replace \$20 million in savings from pension re-amortization and replaced it with money taken from the State's Rainy Day Fund.

The House and Senate voted this week to postpone the payment of the fourth quarter car tax payment to cities and towns from May 1 to June 15. They also voted to temporarily put employer pension contributions in a special account as they did last year when considering pension cuts. These are clear indications that the Supplemental Budget issues, including the COLA cut, may not be reconsidered until the Assembly votes on the FY 2011 Budget in late May or June.

Just Think About It!

Have you ever thought about **running** for public office? Not many people do.

With so much going on in our lives, it's hard to even think about the upcoming electoral season, let alone consider becoming an active participant by running for public office.

But there's no time like now. Now is the time to think about opportunities for you, your co-workers or your family members to run for office and serve the public.

The filing period to declare your intent to run for office in RI is in June, just two months away. I urge you to think about it. Think long and hard, but don't wait. The time is now.

For information on the why, what, where, and when of running for office, contact **Maureen Martin** at the RIFTHP, (401) 273-9800.

Election Calendar Highlights

May 28

Deadline to register to vote in order to file a declaration of candidacy.

June 16

Last day for disaffiliation for primary voters.

June 28, 29 and 30

Declaration of candidacy filing period.

August 14

Deadline to register to vote in the party primaries.

September 14

Primaries

October 2

Deadline to register to vote in the General Election.

November 2

General Election

Bill Introductions

House Bills

- **School Committee Meeting Notice**
(H7522 *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.
- **Eliminate Collective Bargaining References – Title 16**
(H8027 *Williamson, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would eliminate all collective bargaining references and requirements throughout Title 16, the State education law.
- **Eliminate March 1 Notification Deadline**
(H8028 *Williamson, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would eliminate the requirement that school districts notify a teacher that the teacher is not being rehired by March 1st of the school year immediately preceding the school year in which the dismissal would become effective.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreement Nullification**
(H8029 *Williamson, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide that collective bargaining agreements would be null and void in those instances where actual funds to the school committee and/or district fell short of the actual funding received by the committee and/or district.
- **Providence – Elected School Committee**
(H7122 *Almeida, House Municipal Government*)
This act would provide that the members of the School Committee in the City of Providence would be elected officials.
- **Required Municipal Employer Pension Contribution**
(H8045 *Gablinske, House Finance*)
This act would provide that if a municipality fails to make contributions to their municipal pension system in the amounts that are required under law, the amount of State aid to that municipality will be reduced in the same amount due and owing by the municipality to the system.
- **State Employee Health Insurer Choice**
(H7266 *M. Rice, House Finance*)
This act would provide a choice of health care benefits providers to State employees provided that the employees pay any difference in price from that offered by the State's primary insurance provider.
- **Bachelor Degree Requirement – Nurses**
(H7416 *Giannini, House Health, Education and Welfare*)
This act would require nurse applicants graduating with an associate's degree or diploma from a nursing program to obtain a baccalaureate degree within ten (10) years of their initial licensure. Students in baccalaureate program and persons already licensed as a registered professional nurse or those unlicensed graduate professional nurses eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination would be exempt from such requirement.
- **School Closing – Presidential Primaries**
(H7424 *P. O'Neill, House Judiciary*)
This act would require schools to be closed for presidential preference primary days.
- **Consultant Moratorium**
(H7558 *Giannini, House Finance*)
This act would prohibit the hiring of consultants by State departments, agencies, public corporations, quasi-public corporations or entities.
- **Universal Breakfast Program**
(H7746 *Slater, House Health, Education and Welfare*)
This House resolution supports and encourages the expansion of the Universal School Breakfast Program, including, but not limited to, pilot programs that provide a Universal School Breakfast in the classroom, regardless of family income.
- **Full-Day Kindergarten**
(H7920 *DaSilva, House Health, Education and Welfare*)
This act would provide an increase in the hours per day kindergarten students would be required to attend class.