
The

SMITH HILL REPORT



PUBLISHED BY THE RHODE ISLAND FEDERATION OF TEACHERS & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS/AFT, AFL-CIO

February 2, 2026

2026 General Assembly Leadership and Committee Assignments

The Rhode Island General Assembly has convened for the 2026 legislative session with leadership and committee appointments in place. RIFTHP closely monitors assignments to the Education, Labor, and Finance Committees, where much of our legislative advocacy takes place. Below are the full rosters for those key committees in both the House and Senate.

House Committee Assignments

House Education

Joseph McNamara (Chair), Thomas Noret (1st Vice Chair), Rebecca Kislak (2nd Vice Chair), Nathan Biah, Julie Casimiro, Megan Cotter, Susan Donovan, Richard Fascia, Joshua Giraldo, Ramon Perez, Robert Phillips, Earl Read, Mary Ann Shallcross Smith, Sherry Roberts, Brandon Voas

House Labor

Arthur Corvese (Chair), Mary Messier (1st Vice Chair), Karen Alzate (2nd Vice Chair), Jon Brien, Stephen Casey, John Edwards, Deborah Fellela, Richard Fascia, Jenni Furtado, Marie Hopkins, Carol McEntee, Joseph McNamara, David Morales, Ramon Perez, Brandon Potter

House Finance

Marvin Abney (Chair), Scott Slater (1st Vice Chair), Alex Marszalkowski (2nd Vice Chair), Karen Alzate, Jacquelyn Baginski, Nathan Biah, Terri Cortvriend, Grace Diaz, John Edwards, Alex Finkelman, Raymond Hull, George Nardone, William O'Brien, Sherry Roberts, Teresa Tanzi

Senate Committee Assignments

Senate Education

Hanna Gallo (Chair), Melissa Murray (Vice Chair), Samuel Zurier (Secretary), Jacob Bissaillon, Louis DiPalma, Tiara Mack, Mark McKenney, Thomas Paolino, Bridget Valverde

Senate Labor & Gaming

John Burke (Chair), Todd Patalano (Vice Chair), Brian Thompson (Secretary), Jessica de la Cruz, Andrew Dimitri, Stefano Famiglietti, Ryan Pearson, Ana Quezada, Lammis Vargas

Senate Finance

Louis DiPalma (Chair), Frank Ciccone (1st Vice Chair), Walter Felag (2nd Vice Chair), Jonathon Acosta (Secretary), Alana DiMario, Elaine Morgan, Susan Sosnowski, Brian Thompson, Lammis Vargas, Samuel Zurier

For complete leadership and committee assignments, visit:

[Rhode Island Senate Leadership & Committees](#)

[Rhode Island House Leadership & Committees](#)

RIFTHP State House Rally – February 26

Show Our Strength. Stand United. Advance Our Legislative Priorities.

On Thursday, February 26, RIFTHP members and retirees from every sector, including K-12 education, higher education, healthcare, and public service, will rally at the Rhode Island State House to support our legislative agenda. This unified show of strength comes at a critical time in the session, as key bills move through committees and decisions are being made that directly affect our members' work and futures.

The rally will spotlight the Federation's core legislative priorities:

- Pension improvements to strengthen retirement security for public employees
- A charter school moratorium and stronger accountability measures to protect public school funding and oversight
- Classroom safety legislation
- Increased funding for education, state services, and human service organizations

This rally is not just a show of force. It is a strategic action to advance the bills and policies we have been fighting for all session. When lawmakers see the full strength of our union across sectors, job titles, and communities, they understand that our priorities must be theirs as well.

Let's pack the State House and move our legislative agenda forward.

Thursday, February 26

3:30 to 5:00 PM

Rhode Island State House Rotunda



RIFTHP President Maribeth Calabro and Providence Teachers Union Board Member Millie Marzon-Gallop attended a recent fundraiser in support of Senate Majority Leader Frank Ciccone. Their presence underscores RIFTHP's continued engagement with key legislative leaders committed to public education and workers' rights.

Bill Introductions

Charter School Moratorium and Cap Reduction

(H 7415, Messier, House Education)

This bill imposes a moratorium on the approval and expansion of charter public schools. It prohibits the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education from authorizing new or expanding charter schools set to begin operations in the 2026–2027 school year. It also bars the state from approving or funding any new charter school not approved before July 1, 2025, and reduces the statewide cap on charter schools from 35 to 25.

Rule of 90

(H 7390, Fellela, House Finance)

This bill allows teachers, state and municipal employees to retire upon the earlier of reaching age sixty (60) with thirty (30) years of service or the employee's retirement eligibility date under present state statutes.

Rule of 93

(H 7459, Paplauskas, House Finance)

This bill allows public school teachers to retire under a “Rule of 93” (when age plus years of service equal 93), rather than the current “Rule of 95,” thereby enabling earlier retirement eligibility for educators.

COLA Reinstatement for Retirees

(H 7391, O'Brien, House Finance)

This bill reinstates the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in retirement plan year 2026 for all teachers and state employees who retired after July 1, 2012.

Access to Bilingual Education

(H 7389, Morales, House Finance)

This bill appropriates \$950,000 to establish a bilingual education support fund within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and supports expanded access to bilingual education.

School Psychologist Licensing

(H 7335, DeSimone, House Corporations)

This bill includes licensed school psychologists under the general laws regulating psychologists and expands their eligibility for independent practice licensure.

K-12 School Social Worker Ratio

(H 7456, Shallcross Smith, House Finance)

This bill requires all public schools (K-12) to employ one full-time certified school social worker for every 250 students. It allocates \$2 million in the FY 2025 state budget to assist school districts and municipalities in hiring additional social workers to meet this mandate.

School Indoor Air Quality Standards

(S 2382, Urso, Senate Health and Human Services)

This bill establishes recommended indoor air quality standards for schools and requires the Department of Education to incorporate air quality testing into the School Building Authority's needs assessment process.

Providence Schools – End of State Takeover

(H 7414, Slater, House Education)

This bill nullifies the Rhode Island Department of Education's recommendation to continue the state-imposed turnaround plan for the Providence Public School District, effectively restoring local control over the district.

Questions

RIFTHP members with questions about the Smith Hill Report or our legislative agenda may reach out to RIFTHP Lobbyist Jeremy Sencer at (401) 273-9800 or at jsencer@rifthp.org.

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