
The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Governor's Efficiency Commission

Governor Gina Raimondo put together a Commission to investigate state government with an eye towards recommendations on efficiencies that save the state money. Several weeks ago, the Commission issued its report which adopted several recommendations that would allegedly save the State over \$10 million. Those recommendations were put together in a legislative package and introduced as a new [budget article](#).

On Thursday, May 23rd, the House Finance Committee held a hearing on the new budget article. Two RIFTHP local union presidents attended the hearing to testify against different provisions of the budget article.

Howard Union of Teachers President Natalie Herbermann objected to a portion of the budget article that would eliminate teaching jobs at the Rhode Island Training School for Youth. She argued that the varied needs of students at the Training School, some of whom are adjudicated into the program and others who are awaiting adjudication, call for multiple classrooms being available to teach students. It is also important that certain students be separated for safety purposes.

AFT Local 2012 represents workers at the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner, along with certain workers at the School for the Deaf. Local 2012 local union President Joseph DaSilva testified against several different portions of the new budget article. He objected to moving the adult education program from RIDE to the Department of Labor and Training. He also objected to the elimination of jobs at the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner and raised concerns about moving RIDE out of the Shepard Building.

DaSilva and RIFTHP Lobbyist James Parisi also testified against the move of the Adult Education program from RIDE to DLT in a hearing on [S0816](#) in the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, May 29th. DaSilva explained how the RIDE staff are already addressing issues raised by a Senate Study Commission on the issue. DaSilva informed the Committee Rhode Island leads the New England region on its adult education outcomes. Parisi noted that the Governor's Efficiency Commission has proposed cutting jobs and pay for adult education, and this would weaken, not strengthen Rhode Island's adult education system.

The Senate Finance Committee is holding a hearing on the Governor's Efficiency Commission recommendations on Tuesday, June 4th.

Union Representation Bill Moves Forward

Legislation to update Rhode Island's public sector labor laws moved out of the Senate Labor Committee last week and are scheduled for a vote by the full Senate on Thursday, June 6th. [S0712 Sub A](#) by Senator Ciccone would eliminate Rhode Island's agency fee provisions that have been ruled unconstitutional by the US Supreme court in the Janus decision. S0712A requires that public employers provide information to unions when employees are hired. The bill also confirms that unions may charge non-members for grievance and arbitration representation. S0712A changes the bargaining laws for teachers, state workers and municipal workers. A similar bill by Rep. Craven has already been heard by the House Labor Committee.

Education Reform Package Being Considered

The House and Senate are still working on the leadership reform package introduced by House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello and Senate President Dominick Ruggerio at a press conference in May. The Senate Education Committee has posted all seven bills while the House HEW Committee has posted amended versions of two of the seven bills. The House and Senate continue to discuss compromises on the package. To view a summary of the package prepared by the RIFTHP, [click here](#).

Bill Introductions

Human Services Minimum Wage

([H5944](#) *Shanley, House Labor*)

([S0617](#) *DiPalma, Senate Labor*)

The RIFTHP supports these bills which would require state contracted human services providers to pay his or her employees a minimum hourly wage no less than one hundred forty-four percent (144%) of the state minimum wage.

Certified School Nurse Teachers – School Health Program

([H5990](#) *Corvese, House Health, Education and Welfare*)

([S0890](#) *Ciccone, Senate Education*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would require that only certified nurses-teachers may be employed as school nurses in elementary and secondary schools.

Teacher Evaluation Requirements

([H6099](#) Caldwell, House Health, Education and Welfare)

([S0868](#) Seveney, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP opposes these bills which would direct the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to implement an assessment and evaluation system that applies to both teachers and administrators, emphasizes the delivery of instruction in alignment with the state's standards, and includes model scoring tools. This act would also require local education agencies (LEAs) to adopt the model assessment and evaluation system for use in their schools.

Adult Education Transfer – RIDE to DLT

([H6107](#) Kislak, House Finance)

([S0816](#) Metts, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP opposes these bills which would establish the Office of Adult Education and Literacy and the Adult Education and Employment Advisory Committee within the Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island (GWBRI), to carry out adult education and literacy services. The programs and services of adult education consist of basic education, career and technical education, higher education, continuing education in professional and technological occupations, general personal development, public service education, and supportive services. Grants shall be issued for adult educational services based on need and performance. This act would repeal the Adult Education Act as set forth in chapter 97 of title 16 and appropriations to aid evening schools.

RIDE – Instructional Support

([H6111](#) McKiernan, House Health, Education and Welfare)

([S0864](#) Satchell, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP supports these bills which would direct the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to provide professional support and assistance to local education agencies ("LEAs") regarding effective ways to use data such as the LEA's budget and demographics, school culture, and assessments to improve student performance.

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