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SMITH HILL REPORT



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Teacher Evaluation, Standardized Test Bills Pass Assembly

After months of vigorous lobbying by RIFTHP staff and thousands of member contacts with elected officials, the General Assembly moved two significant bills through the legislature on the final day of session on Friday, June 20. The bills will not become law if the Governor vetoes them.

Legislation to eliminate the required annual evaluations for teachers rated effective and highly effective was amended in the Senate. The revised legislation provides that teachers rated effective are evaluated every other year and highly effective teachers are evaluated every three years. There was also language inserted in the bill to ensure that administrators have an annual conference with effective and highly effective teachers. The text of [S2738A](#) by Senator Goodwin and [H7096B](#) by Representative O'Brien can be viewed by clicking on their bill numbers. Last month's vote in the House on the O'Brien bill was 69-3. The June 20, 2014 Senate votes on the Goodwin and O'Brien bills were 34-3. Voting against the teacher evaluation bill were Senators Bates, Cote and Pearson. To view the Senate votes, click here [S2738A](#), [H7096B](#). The amended version of the teacher evaluation bills passed the House unanimously.

Legislation to impose a three year moratorium on using any standardized test as a graduation requirement had passed the Senate, but was held in the House. House Speaker Mattiello reconsidered his opposition to the bill when confronted with a waiver process that varied from school district to school

June 27, 2014

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district. The House overwhelmingly passed bills by Senator Satchell ([S2059Aaa](#)) and Representative Amore ([H8363aa](#)) to support the three year moratorium. Voting against one or both of the bills were Senators Bates, Cote, DiPalma, Hodgson, Nesselbush, and O'Neill. Also voting against the bills were Representatives Hearn, Marcello and Tomasso. To view the Senate votes, click here [S2059Aaa](#), [H8363aa](#). To view the House votes, click here [S2059Aaa](#), [H8363aa](#).



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ACT NOW!!!

The successes with the Assembly on these important bills will evaporate if Governor Chafee vetoes the legislation. Please take a moment and email Governor Chafee asking for his support of these two bills. The testing bill is already on his desk and he will be receiving the evaluation bill soon. According to the Rhode Island Constitution, while the legislature is in recess, legislation becomes law if not vetoed by the Governor within six (6) days.

[Click here to Send a Message to the Governor](#)

Full-Day Kindergarten Advances

Senator Hanna Gallo has spent years advocating for increased state funding for full day kindergarten. This session, she secured passage of legislation accelerating funding for districts that transition from half-day to full-day kindergarten. The legislation, [S2791A](#), also directs state money reserved for planning full-day kindergarten to larger school districts. The House version [H8219A](#) was sponsored by Rep Jacquard. The RIFTHP supported both bills, which unanimously passed both chambers.

Notification Date Change

The RIFTHP has continuously opposed efforts to change the notification date for teacher terminations from March 1 to June 1. We have indicated support of delaying the notification date for teacher layoffs. This session, legislation passed the Assembly that

delayed the notification date in state law for teacher layoffs due to student population decline from March 1 to June 1. The bill also created a June 1 notification date for any teacher termination (tenured and non-tenured) caused by “fiscal exigency or program reorganization”. The RIFTHP was not able to limit the bill to layoffs. The legislation was sponsored by Senator Lou DiPalma ([S2014](#)) and Representative Ruggiero ([H7026](#)). Both bills passed the House and Senate unanimously.

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