

The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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

Union Organizing

The Rhode Island General Assembly did not meet last week, following the school vacation calendar. Prior to the break, the RIFTHP testified on one bill related to union organizing.

[H5180](#) by Rep. Blazejewski would permit new union organizing through a process called a "card check". Under current law, union elections are triggered by the filing of a petition. H5180 would provide that the union would be recognized through a card check process if 70% of the affected employees signed union authorization cards.

RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi testified in support of the bill. He recounted the attempted organizing of librarians in the City of Warwick that was thwarted after the administrators and City leaders reneged on an agreement with the RIFTHP to recognize a union through a card check process. Even though the Rhode Island State Labor Relations Board found the City guilty of an unfair labor practice, the organizing effort stopped because of employer tactics. Such a situation would have been avoided if the state law offered automatic card check.

AFSCME Council 94 lobbyist Jim Cenerini argued at the hearing that public sector employers sometimes use coercive tactics once a union election petition is filed. In an effort to avoid such tactics, he argued, a card check process should be enacted into law. Other supporters included Mark Manchino of the RI AFL-CIO. Testifying against the bill was the League of Cities and Towns.

Bill Introductions

School Construction Moratorium – Abolish

([H5393](#) *McLaughlin, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would eliminate the moratorium on new school building projects effective upon passage of the act or May 1, 2015, whichever were to occur first.

Education Funding Formula Acceleration

([H5394](#) *Ackerman, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would accelerate the transition plan for calculating state aid to education. The act would specifically accelerate the amounts paid to those local educational agencies which receive more than the education aid the LEA was receiving as of the effective date of the school funding formula, but keeps the transition plan in place for those districts receiving less education aid.

Contract Continuation – Teachers and Municipal Employees

February 23, 2015

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([H5475](#) Carnevale, House Labor)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would require that the contractual provisions contained in a collective bargaining agreement with certified school teachers and municipal employees would continue until a successor agreement has been reached between the parties.

Constitutional Amendment – Line Item Veto

([H5519](#) Filippi, House Finance)

The RIFTHP opposes this resolution placing a constitutional amendment on the ballot which would allow the Governor to reduce or veto any item of appropriation in a bill presented to him or her. Portions of the bill not reduced or vetoed shall become law. An item vetoed or reduced shall be returned to the house in which it originated and may be restored to its original amount and become law in the same manner as a veto override. If a reduced item is not so restored, it shall become law in the reduced amount.

DSP Rate Increase

([S0044](#) DiPalma, Senate Finance)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would provide for the Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals to adopt a state reimbursement system for community and nonprofit agencies that would encourage the hiring and retention of competent, qualified, and caring individuals. Effective April 1, 2015, the reimbursement rate for direct support professionals employed by private developmental disability organizations shall increase to \$13.97 per hour.

Constitutional Amendment – Line Item Veto

([S0057](#) O'Neill, Senate Judiciary)

([S0059](#) Raptakis, Senate Judiciary)

The RIFTHP opposes this joint resolution placing a constitutional amendment on the ballot which would allow the Governor to reduce or veto any item of appropriation in a bill presented to him or her. Portions of the bill not reduced or vetoed shall become law. An item vetoed or reduced shall be returned to the house in which it originated and may be restored to its original amount and become law in the same manner as a veto override. If a reduced item is not so restored, it shall become law in the reduced amount.

Voter Initiative

([S0066](#) Cote, Senate Special Legislation)

The RIFTHP opposes this act which would provide a detailed process by which a proponent of a voter initiative and referendum proposal would present the proposal to the Secretary of State, the General Assembly and the Governor.

**LaborVision is seen on Cox
Ch. 14 and FioS Ch. 33**

Tuesday @ 7PM

Thursday @ 7PM

Saturday @ 5PM

Senate/House Contacts

To view a list of all 38 Senate members, including mail, phone and e-mail contact information, [click here](#).

To view a list of all 75 House members, including mail, phone and e-mail contact information, [click here](#).

This contact information will also be posted at the RIFTHP website at www.RIFTHP.org/GAInfo.

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