



The

SMITH HILL REPORT

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Budget Commission Role Questioned

On Thursday March 19, 2015, the RIFTHP testified in support of legislation that would limit the role that state budget commissions play in personnel decisions.

The legislation, [H5200](#) by Representative Phillips, would prevent budget commissions from having any authority over the hiring firing and assignment of municipal workers. The bill was heard in the House Finance Committee.

James Parisi, RIFTHP lobbyist testified in support of the bill. He noted that the impetus of the bill was the Woonsocket Budget Commission getting involved in decisions over the school superintendent position.

While he acknowledged that the recent history did not involve union members, he told the committee that an interpretation of the current law could permit budget commission interference in teacher and school staff hiring and assignment decisions. That goes well beyond what Budget Commissions are purported to do, make budgetary decisions to ensure fiscal stability.

Guns in Schools

The RIFTHP has joined with other education organizations and community activists in an effort to promote school safety. Legislation has been introduced by the Attorney General's office supported by the RIFTHP and others that would ban individuals who possess a permit to carry a concealed weapon from possessing it on school grounds. The legislation filed by Senator Metts [S0743](#) and representative Aijello [H5861](#) was recently introduced and has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.

March 23, 2015

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The Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence, the coalition put together to support this legislation is holding a rally on April 16, 2015.

Bill Introductions

Curriculum - Music Education

([H5776](#) *Morin, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would mandate that public secondary schools, managed or controlled by the state, provide courses in musical performing arts as part of their curriculum effective July 1, 2015.

School Vouchers

([H5790](#) *Hull, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP opposes this act which would provide parents of K-12 students in Rhode Island with an opportunity to enroll their child in an educational program of their choosing, either via open enrollment in a traditional public school in their own district or any other public school district, or by receiving a scholarship, with designated public monies to follow the student to a participating private school or private curriculum program selected by the parent. The program combines aspects of what are sometimes referred to as "school choice" and "school voucher" programs.

State Funding of Charter Schools

([H5794](#) *Barros, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would remove a city or town's financial obligation to contribute to their resident students who enroll in charter schools, William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School or the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center.

Charter School Moratorium

([H5795](#) *Barros, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would establish a moratorium on approval of any new charter public schools and on the expansion of any existing charter public schools on and after May 1, 2015.

Charter School Housing Aid

([H5834](#) *Malik, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP opposes this act which would amend the provisions by which charter public schools apply for state aid for reimbursement of school housing costs and would further amend the calculation method of housing costs under this section.

State Worker Longevity Reinstatement

([S0371](#) *Ciccone, Senate Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would restore longevity payments of five percent (5%) of base salary for employees after ten (10) years of service and increase to ten percent (10%) of base salary after twenty (20) years of service.

State Employee and Teacher Retiree Medical Insurance

([S0372](#) *Ciccone, Senate Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would revert back from the most recent changes in the general laws concerning the process by which the state pays for medical coverage for Medicare eligible state and teacher retirees.



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

Tuesday @ 7PM

Thursday @ 7PM

Saturday @ 5PM

Coming Up

On Tuesday, March 24 at the Rise of the House, the House Finance Committee will consider [H5731](#) by Rep. Handy, a bill that would require the yearly state contribution to the pension system not be reduced until the fund ratio meets or exceeds eighty percent (80%).

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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