

*The*

# SMITH HILL REPORT



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

## Assembly Opens 2015 Session

On Tuesday, January 6, 2015 the Rhode Island General Assembly convened at the State House to begin the new legislative session. The first few weeks of the session will be dedicated to getting bills drafted and introduced for consideration. In general, the deadline to get bills introduced in the House or Senate is mid-February. All committees will hold hearings on bills in the ensuing two months. Except for legislation related to finances, committees must act on bills by mid-April. Bills that pass a committee are then voted on by the full House or Senate. If the bill passes, it is then considered by the other chamber. Most legislation and the State Budget are not finalized until the Assembly finishes its business in June or early July.

The most important bill introduction is the proposed State Budget. Once Governor Raimondo puts her budget plan together, the bill is drafted and introduced. The House Finance Committee will hold hearings on each department or agency of state government. In addition to line item budget appropriations, the budget bill will include legislative changes appended to the budget. These legislative changes, called budget articles, will also be heard and considered by the House Finance Committee before being acted on later this year.

## Smith Hill Report Distribution

The RIFTHP publishes the Smith Hill Report regularly throughout the legislative session. The SHR is issued once a week. We began an all-electronic format last year. The SHR is sent to all AFT local union presidents who may then forward the SHR to members. If you are a RIFTHP member and wish to have the Smith Hill Report emailed directly to you, [click here](#).

Non-members may also sign up for electronic delivery of the SHR by [clicking here](#).

## RIFTHP Endorsed Candidates Win

Many candidates running for office in the 2014 elections filled out candidate questionnaires, attended interview meetings and presented their case for getting endorsed by the RIFTHP Executive Board.

**January 16, 2014**

### In This Issue

- Assembly Opens 2015 Session
- Smith Hill Report Distribution
- RIFTHP Endorsed Candidates Win
- RIFTHP Leads Fight Against Question 3
- Senate/House Contacts

[Sign up here to receive the Smith Hill Report directly!](#)

Candidates were willing to go through the endorsement process because they understand the importance of getting support from an organization made up of a diverse group of workers who historically have a high voter turnout rate and who are willing to work on behalf of candidates.

New to the electoral endorsement policy at RIFTHP was the electronic survey, or candidate questionnaire, that was distributed to candidates in state-wide races and certain General Assembly races. These surveys, which asked candidates about their positions on issues pertaining to education, collective bargaining and pension rights, privatization of public services, income equality and convening a constitutional convention were reviewed by RIFTHP staff, Board members and local political directors and activists. After completing the survey and requesting the endorsement of the RIFTHP, candidates were invited to an interview meeting with the RIFTHP Election Committee or the RIFTHP Executive Council in order to get the backing of the RIFTHP.

Once a candidate received the endorsement by vote of the Executive Council, the RIFTHP, working with local unions and member volunteers, hit the campaign trail on their behalf. Letters of support were sent to members letting them know who and why the endorsed candidates were. For weeks leading up to the primary and general elections, members worked on phone banks and knocked on labor household doors to talk to other union members about candidates who were pro-worker and pro-labor.

The following are the RIFTHP endorsed Congressional, state-wide and General Assembly candidates who won their races:

### **Congressional**

- Jack Reed
- James Langevin
- David Cicilline

### **State-Wide**

- Nellie Gorbea
- Peter F. Kilmartin
- Seth Magaziner

## **General Assembly \***

### **Representatives**

- J. Aaron Regunberg
- Daniel Mckiernan
- Anastasia P. Williams
- Scott A. Slater
- Joseph Solomon
- Patricia Serpa
- Robert E. Craven, Sr.
- Teresa Ann Tanzi
- Kathleen Fogarty
- Samuel A. Azzinaro
- Deborah A. Fellela
- Jeremiah T. O'Grady
- Stephen M. Casey
- James N. McLaughlin
- Mary Duffy Messier

### **Senators**

- Gayle L. Goldin
- Frank A. Ciccone, III
- Adam J. Satchell
- M. Teresa Paiva Weed
- Stephen R. Archambault
- Hanna M. Gallo
- Cynthia Coyne
- William A. Walaska
- Leonidas P. Raptakis

\* Many Senators and Representatives had no opponent. The RIFTHP does not normally endorse candidates who have no opponent.

## **RIFTHP Leads Fight Against Question 3**

The RIFTHP was also proud to be a leader in creating a community coalition called "Citizens for Responsible Government" to oppose the passage of Question 3 on the ballot to convene a State Constitutional Convention. The coalition member groups; labor organizations, religious and minority groups, the LGBT community and women's organizations understood the dangers of convening a constitutional convention which could have opened the floodgates for out-of-state money to influence votes in RI. Workers' rights, civil rights, women's reproductive rights and the recently enacted marriage equality statute would all have in danger. Two weeks before the election, a Brown University poll showed Question 3 passing with 42% favorable, 27% unfavorable and 31% undecided. Question 3 was resoundingly rejected by RI voters in the November election by a 55% to 45% margin.

## 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](http://www.RIFTHP.org/GAInfo).

[Connect with us on](#)



[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

**© American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. © 2011**

This e-mail and any attachments are confidential and are intended solely for the named addressee(s). If you are not a named addressee, you should not copy, alter, post, forward, distribute or disseminate the contents of the e-mail or attachments. Any views or opinions expressed are solely those of the individual and do not necessarily represent those of American Federation of Teachers (AFT).