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# *The* SMITH HILL REPORT

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## **Raimondo Promises Local Approval Veto**

At a press conference on Wednesday, April 6, Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo promised to veto legislation that would provide local communities the ability to approve or deny participation in new charter schools. The legislation passed the House early this session and has not yet been heard in the Rhode Island Senate. President Frank Flynn has committed the RIFTHP to making revision of the charter school approval process a priority, and the union has been working with the NEA/RI, the RI Association of School Committees, and the RI School Superintendents Association to secure passage of such legislation.

## **Certification Bill Challenged**

On March 30, the RIFTHP weighed in on a bill that would require teachers obtaining or renewing their certificate to get training in First Aid, CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators (AED). The bill, [H7661](#) by Representative Giarrusso, was being considered by the House HEW Committee. RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi submitted written testimony in opposition to this required training being tied to a teaching certificate. He noted costs would be borne by the teacher. Parisi re-stated the RIFTHP support for having a certified school nurse teacher in every school.

## **Retirement Benefit Taxation Exemption**

The retiree chapter of the RIFTHP, in conjunction with other public sector retiree groups, has initiated a campaign to support legislation that would exempt government pensions from the Rhode Island state income tax. Last session, the State exempted Social Security from the state income tax for those under certain annual income thresholds (\$80,000 individual, \$100,000 filing joint returns). The R.I. AFT/R is seeking to expand that tax break to government pensions in part because half of the state's teachers do not participate in Social Security and did not benefit from the relief provided last session. To support their effort, all retirees are urged to use this link to contact your Senator and Representative.

[Expand the Social Security Income Tax Waiver](#)

## Rhode Island Presidential Primary

Rhode Island's Presidential Primary is **Tuesday, April 26**. On April 26, voters will be able to pick a presidential candidate and elect convention delegates for their chosen candidate. Running to be convention delegates pledged to support Hillary Clinton are four AFT members. Voters in Congressional District 1 will be able to vote for Hillary Clinton delegates **Fred Hoppe**, President of the Lincoln Teachers' Association, and RIFTHP Director of Professional Issues **Colleen Callahan**. RIFTHP members living in the Second Congressional District will be able to vote for Hillary Clinton delegates **Lizbeth Larkin**, President of the Cranston Teachers' Alliance, and RIFTHP Field Representative and Lobbyist **James Parisi**.

## Bill Introductions

### **Line Item Veto**

([H8007](#) *Newberry, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP opposes this resolution to approve, publish, and submit to the electors a proposition of amendment to the Constitution of the State referendum on line item veto.

### **Competency-Based Proficiency**

([S2017](#) *Picard, Senate Education*)

This act would require that the Board of Education adopt a competency-based/proficiency-based learning policy whereby students can earn credits through demonstration of competency, and this policy would be approved by June 1, 2017.

### **Virtual Education Plan – Inclement Weather**

([S2018](#) *Picard, Senate Education*)

This act would establish a process by which a virtual education plan may be established and used by school districts during inclement weather which would count as a school day, provided that the plan is approved by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

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