

The

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RIFTHP Repeats Support of Tuition Proposal

Governor Raimondo's plan to waive two years of college tuition was heard in the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday, March 30th. The Governor and the three public higher education institution presidents testified in support of [Article 3](#) before a committee that has a new chair. Senator William Conley of East Providence was named Finance Committee Chair last week. The House Finance Committee took hours of testimony on the proposal several weeks ago, including testimony from RIFTHP President Frank Flynn and RIFTHP Director of Professional Issues Dr. Colleen Callahan.

RIFTHP President Frank Flynn testified in support of the budget article in the Senate. He reminded the Senators that the state has been very generous in giving corporate tax breaks in order to spur economic development, and that they should treat tuition-free education in the same light. He extolled the benefits of the tuition plan, highlighting an under-reported provision that provides additional resources to RIC, URI and CCRI in order to accommodate more students and enhance advising services. Flynn testified that Rhode Island provides one of the lowest levels of state financial support to its public higher education institutions compared to the rest of the country.



Frank Flynn, President, RIFTHP

RIFTHP Testified on Adjunct Medical Insurance

RIC Adjunct Faculty Union President Deborah Kaspin, RIC Adjunct Faculty Union Secretary Juskuv Zdenko (who is also President of the Adjunct Union at CCRI) and RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi testified in support of legislation that would provide medical benefits, to adjunct faculty members at RIC, URI and CCRI who meet certain criteria. The bill, [S0151](#), was sponsored by Senator Joshua Miller who chaired the Senate Health and Human Services Committee hearing the bill on Thursday, March 30th.

Parisi presented the committee with a [fact sheet](#) which explained the bill and highlighted the reasons why the cost estimates, previously provided by the Postsecondary Commissioner, are wildly inflated. Most adjuncts do not teach enough courses to be eligible for benefits under the bill or they are able to get medical insurance through other means and would not access state benefits for their adjunct work. Parisi also provided a proposed amendment to clarify that adjuncts would pay cost-share for benefits as do other state workers.

President Kaspin testified about the amount of time adjuncts put into their work and described the low pay for the important work of teaching at the College. She spoke of the challenges some faculty face obtaining insurance on the Exchange. This Insurance Exchange is facing elimination by President Trump.

Mr. Zdenko testified how he works more hours than regular faculty because he teaches courses at both RIC and CCRI, yet he still gets low pay and no benefits.

Senate Reorganization

The new Senate leadership team announced several new Committee Chairs last week. The new Senate Judiciary Chair is Erin Lynch Prata of Warwick. She replaced Senator McCaffrey who is now the Senate Majority Leader. The new Chair of the Senate Finance Committee is Senator William Conley of East Providence, who was named to replace Senator Daniel DaPonte, also of East Providence. The Senate combined the functions of the Oversight and Rules Committees into one Committee on Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight to be chaired by Senator Frank Lombardi of Cranston. The Rules Committee had been chaired by Senator Lynch Prata. Use this link to view the new committee membership in the [Senate](#).

Bill Introductions

Arbitrator Selection Process

([S0677](#) Lombardo, *Senate Labor*)

The RIFTHP opposes this act which would replace the American Arbitration Association, as the selector of labor arbitrators, in non-grievance contract matters, with the director of the department of labor and

training. The director shall select retired Rhode Island judges and magistrates for firefighter, police, teacher and municipal employee matters.

Public Employee Required TDI Participation

([S0678](#) *Goldin, Senate Labor*)

The RIFTHP opposes this act which would expand temporary disability insurance benefits to state and municipal employees, increase TDI benefits, change the calculation of the taxable wage base, modify the contribution formula and increase the maximum amount of benefit weeks from thirty (30) to thirty-two (32). It also would increase from four (4) to six (6) weeks the length of time employees can receive temporary caregiver insurance benefits and would make employees who care for their siblings or grandchildren eligible for benefits.

ELL Categorical Funding

([S0690](#) *Quezada, Senate Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would amend the state aid funding formula for compensation of school districts for the additional costs of students learning English.

Carried Interest

([H5563](#) *Regunberg, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would establish a nineteen percent (19%) carried interest fairness fee for investment management services in order to tax the carried interest income of hedge fund and private equity investors as traditional ordinary earned income. This act would take effect upon enactment into law by the states of Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts of legislation having an identical effect with this act, but if the states of Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts shall have already enacted such legislation, this act would take effect immediately; provided, that the Department of Revenue would notify the General Assembly of the enactment of such legislation by the states of Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts in furtherance of effectuating the provisions of this act.



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