

The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Dyslexia Screening

RIFTHP President Frank Flynn offered support of legislation filed by PTU member William O'Brien to ensure that students are screened for Dyslexia. The bill, [H5136](#) was heard in the House HEW Committee on Wednesday February 5. The legislation would insert in the existing state law regarding literacy a requirement that students with Dyslexia receive additional assistance and support. The legislation also addresses professional development opportunities for teachers.

President Flynn spoke of the importance of early identification of students in need of services and highlighted the number of students who need specialized services in public schools. Support of the goals of the O'Brien legislation in conjunction with related bills was also offered by RIDE.

Charter School Construction and Renovation

On Tuesday, February 24, RIFTHP lobbyists testified against legislation to increase state payments to charter schools for new school construction and renovation. Under the current system, charter schools are eligible for a 30% reimbursement from the state. [S0314](#) by Senator Doyle would allow that percentage to increase based on the poverty of the communities sending students to the charter school.

Parisi told the House Finance Committee that public schools have suffered under the four year moratorium on new school construction and renovation resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in delayed projects. He asked the Committee to prioritize public school construction and renovation over giving more money

March 3, 2015

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to independent charter schools and mayoral academies. He also criticized the current funding formula that is overly generous to independent charter schools and mayoral academies. Joining Parisi in opposing the bill was Tim Duffy of the RI Association of School Committees. Support for the legislation was provided by the League of Charter Schools, RIDE, and RI-CAN, a corporate funded charter school advocacy organization.



Bill Introductions

Constitutional Amendment – Voter Initiative

([S0067](#) Cote, Senate Special Legislation)

The RIFTHP opposes this joint resolution which would propose an amendment to the State Constitution, by establishing a voter initiative process to allow voters to initiate proposed legislation which would, upon a majority vote of the electorate, become law.

Mayoral Charter School Approval Process

([S0087](#) Satchell, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would provide that a mayoral academy charter school's application would not be approved by the Board of Education unless the school committee and the city or town council of each included municipality also supported the application.

Income Tax – Retirement Income Exemption

([S0101](#) Kettle, Senate Finance)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would exempt from taxation the first fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) of personal income from a retirement plan qualified as such under federal law.

Full Day Kindergarten Funding

([S0144](#) Gallo, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would provide that funding for kindergartens that have been converted from part-time to full-time beginning with the 2015-2016 school year would be fully funded beginning in fiscal year 2016.

Teacher Certification – Notice of Renewal

([S0155](#) Picard, Senate Education)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide e-mail notice to teachers and other licensed public school personnel when any action of recertification, revocation, or repeal of their license is proposed and pending.

Pension Litigation Costs

([S0162](#) Ruggiero, Senate Finance)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would provide that any litigation costs paid from the restricted receipt account for the Retirement Board be limited to defending actions that arise as a result of decisions made by the Board.

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

Tuesday @ 7PM

Thursday @ 7PM

Saturday @ 5PM

Coming Up

On Thursday, March 5 at 3:30 PM the House Labor Committee will consider [H5475](#) by Rep. Carnevale that would provide that teacher and municipal worker contracts continue until a new contract is negotiated.

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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