February 19, 2021

REVENUE CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23RD

The Revenue for Rhode Island coalition is launching our 2021 campaign on **Tuesday, February 23, 2021** with a virtual kick-off press conference from **1 p.m. - 2 p.m**.

The press conference will be held on Zoom at:

[Revenue for Rhode Island Kick-off Press Conference](#)

(After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the event.)

The event will also be broadcast on Facebook Live on [facebook.com/RevenueForRI](#).

Our coalition is calling for state leaders to raise much-needed revenue for our state by ensuring those making over $475,000 contribute their fair share.

We propose adding one new tax bracket for the top 1% of earners – at a marginal rate of 8.99% (in place of the current top rate of 5.99%) on income above $475,000 – which will generate an estimated $128.2 million in new revenues. The average adjusted gross income for those impacted is $1 million dollars per year, and our proposal will have no effect on Rhode Islanders outside of the top 1%. Those who earn less than $475,000 will see no change in their tax rate.

QUESTION 1 VIDEO RELEASED

Supporters of Question 1 – the higher education construction bond currently before the voters, recently released a video in support of the bond question. To view the video, [click here](#). The RIFTHP and the RIC AFT have worked to promote this bond, which includes funding for a new science building on the Rhode Island College campus. Early in-person voting has commenced, and mail ballots have been mailed. In-person voting at the polls will be on Tuesday March 2nd.

WORKERS COMPENSATION – COVID-19 BILL HEARD

The RIFTHP and two nurses from FNHP Local 5022 offered testimony at a House Labor Committee hearing on February 10, 2021 in support of legislation introduced by Rep. Anastasia Williams related to workers compensation benefits. The bill, H5264, would create a presumption that health care workers and other essential workers who contract COVID-19 did so as a result of their employment and would ensure that workers compensation coverage would be provided. Not surprisingly, the bill attracted considerable opposition from the employer representatives.

Melanie Gambardella, an RN with the VNA of Care New England and a leader of the RIFTHP local, offered testimony in support of the bill. She cited the essential care she and her colleagues provided in uncontrolled environments such as patients' homes throughout the pandemic even though PPE was in short supply as an important reason to support the bill. Alicia Cook, another RN who works in home care, also offered a written statement in support of the bill. She cited situations where patients or family members declined or refused to wear a mask during a home care visit as a reason why the workers compensation bill is important. RIFHHP lobbyist James Parisi also offered written testimony in support of the bill. To view their testimony, click here.

EDUCATION BILLS CONSIDERED

The RIFTHP offered verbal testimony on two bills considered by the House Education Committee on February 10th. RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi offered support of H5069 by Rep. McNamara. The bill would require charter schools to enroll students who reflect the demographics of the sending districts. Parisi supported the bill, testifying that the RI special needs population is about 17% of the student body, but is only 6-9% of the student body at the three charter schools that recently were granted expansion. He also offered that failure to address the disparities in enrollments between neighborhood schools and charter schools would be another reason to revisit the funding mechanism the state uses to direct money to charter schools. Click here to view his written testimony.

Parisi also testified on a bill, H5078 by Rep. McNamara, that would restrict the suspension of elementary school students by requiring the creation of a behavior plan before a suspension. Parisi urged the Committee to not be too prescriptive in limiting how administrators could discipline students to protect the learning environment for all students. Several committee members voiced skepticism of the RIFTHP objections, indicating they sought Assembly involvement in reducing the suspension of elementary school students. The RI Superintendent's Association voiced general support of the bill provided that there be some limited amendments. The ACLU and Kids Count testified in support of the measure. Click here to view Parisi's testimony. The Education Committee voted to hold all bills for further study.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

School Food Waste Recycling

(S0104 *Valverde, Senate Environment & Agriculture*)

(H5328 *Messier, House Education*)

These bills would require schools to comply with composting and recycling laws, would promote the donation of unspoiled nonperishable food by schools, would promote the selection of local food service companies for school food service contracts and the selection of vendors who recycle organic-waste at appropriate facilities, and would require the use of share tables at all schools.

Constitutional Amendment - Right to Adequate Education

(S0205 *Picard, Senate Education*)

(H5421 *Messier, House State Government & Elections*)

This joint resolution would add two sections to the Rhode Island Constitution. One would guarantee Rhode Island residents an adequate education to permit them to learn at high levels, become lifelong learners, productive workers, and responsible citizens and the other would make the rights guaranteed under the constitution judicially enforceable.

Teacher Evaluation Standards - Annual Review

(S0208 *Seveney, Senate Education*)

This bill would direct the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to implement an assessment and evaluation system that applies to both teachers and administrators and is aligned with the state's standards. This bill requires annual review of the evaluation system.

Anti-Littering and Recycling Awareness Education

(S0210 *Felag, Senate Education*)

This bill would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, to make educational resources available regarding litter prevention and recycling awareness to elementary school students.

CTE Program Attendance - State-Approval

(S0212 *Gallo, Senate Education*)

This bill would seek to advance economic development by guaranteeing students the right to enroll in approved career technical educational programs and would allow them to enroll outside the district of residence if their district does not offer a duplicate program.

FY 22 Education Aid - Student Attendance Calculation

(H5237 *McNamara, House Education*)

This bill would amend the method of calculating state aid to education for the 2021-2022 school year only. This would be important for districts that experienced enrollment decline due to COVID-19.

Student Dyslexia Screening

(H5314 *Quattrocchi, House Education*)

This bill would require screening for dyslexia and related disorders for public school students in grades kindergarten through grade four (K-4) and would provide for instruction in cursive writing.

IEP services - Homeschooled Students

(H5315 *Quattrocchi, House Education*)

This bill would require all responsible school districts to provide all of their students, including those being homeschooled, in need of IEP services to receive them, no matter which school they attend.

Funding for Teacher Professional Development - Dyslexia

(H5317 *Quattrocchi, House Education*)

This bill would provide that the general assembly would appropriate $50,000 annually for teacher training in Orton-Gillingham classroom educator program.

Follow Us

The RIFTHP has a twitter account for legislative issues. If you are on twitter, follow us @RIFTHPL.

SIGN UP NOW!

register to receive the SHR directly, click here.