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*The*

# SMITH HILL REPORT



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## House Labor Committee Approves Contract Continuation

The primary legislative priority this session for the RIFTHP is enactment of legislation to ensure an expired teacher or municipal worker contract continues until a new agreement is negotiated by the parties. The House bill, [H5593](#) by Camille Vella-Wilkinson, was scheduled for a vote in the House Labor Committee on Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>. At the beginning of the Committee deliberation, Rep. Jared Nunes made a motion to hold the bill for further study in order to support attempts by the bill's opponents to limit the scope of the bill to salary and benefits. That motion failed on a 10-4 vote. After further debate, the House Labor Committee approved the bill on a largely party-line vote of 11-3.

Voting to support the bill were Representatives:

Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski, (D)

Rep. Stephen M. Casey, (D)

Rep. Robert E. Craven, Sr., (D)

Rep. Helder J. Cunha (D)

Rep. John G. Edwards (D)

Rep. Deborah A. Fellela (D)

Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D)

Rep. Carol Hagan McKentee (D)

Rep. Daniel P. McKiernan (D)

Rep. Mary Messier (D)

Rep. J. Aaron Regunberg (D)

Voting against the bill were Representatives:

Rep. Brian C. Newberry (R)

Rep. Jared R. Nunes (D)

Rep. Patricia Morgan (R)

After the vote, RIFTHP President Frank Flynn sent a letter of to all Representatives ([click here](#)) and Senators ([click here](#)) asking them to support this important bill. Local Union leaders have been calling legislators to encourage support of the legislation as well. RIFTHP members are encouraged to ask their Senator and Representative to support the bill by using this ([link](#)) to get their contact information.

### **Teacher Survivor Benefit Bill Advances**

Legislation to increase the amount of money the survivors of deceased teachers receive passed the House on a 73 -0 vote. That bill, [H5071 Sub A](#) by Representative Amore provides a 10% benefit improvement for all teachers covered by the program. The RI Teachers Survivor Benefit program was established to provide a death benefit to teachers not covered by Social Security. The Senate bill, [S0571 Sub A](#) by Senator DaPonte, passed the Senate on a 35-0 vote. The RIFTHP has been working with General Treasurer Seth Magaziner to develop a bill that benefits teachers.

### **Bills on the Move**

The following bills have passed the Committee process and the full chamber of either the House or the Senate. To be enacted into law, the bill must pass the same process in the other chamber before being sent to the Governor for approval.

#### **House Study Commission - School Start Time**

[\(H5888A\)](#) *Casimiro, Enacted*

This bill would create a House Study Commission to investigate changing the start times of Rhode Island public high schools. The RIFTHP will have one appointment on the commission.

#### **Title 16 Study Commission**

[\(S0556\)](#) *DiPalma, Enacted*

This Resolution would create a fourteen (14) member special legislative commission whose purpose it would be to conduct a comprehensive review and make recommendations to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education and any other state agency regarding updating, streamlining and ensuring the relevance of laws contained in Rhode Island General Laws Title 16, and who would report back to the Senate no later than March 1, 2018, and whose life would expire on July 1, 2018. The RIFTHP will be represented on the work group.

#### **Civics Education Commission Membership**

[\(S0633\)](#) *Gallo, House Health, Education and Welfare*

This bill would alter the membership, reporting protocol, and meeting requirements of the Civic Education Commission.

## Sunscreen Protection on School Grounds

([H5176](#) Bennett, Senate Education)

This bill would allow students in public schools to possess and use sunscreen.

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