
The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Enacted

All of the bills reported in the June 20, 2023 edition of the Smith Hill Report as having passed the House and Senate in concurrence (identical wording) have become law, either with the Governor's signature or they became effective without his signature. Those bills were:

Rhode Island Hope Scholarship Pilot Program Act

[H 5099-aa](#)

[S 0077-aa](#)

Providence CBA Ratification

[H 5773](#)

[S 0190](#)

State Deferred Compensation Plans - Roth Contributions

[S 0714](#)

[H 5519](#)

American Rescue Plan School Funding Report

[H 6128-A](#)

[S 0767-A](#)

Special Education Advisory Committees

[H 5668](#)

[S 0489](#)

Public Employee Identity Theft

[H 5684-Aaa](#)

Additional Enacted Legislation

In addition, the following bills have also become law since the close of the General Assembly session last month:

Survivor Benefits - Former Spouse Divorced

[H 5093](#), which was introduced by Representative Fellela, passed the House on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 73 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/16/2023, with a vote of 35 yeas, 1 nay, and 0 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/24/2023 and became law.

[S 1129](#), which was introduced by Senator Ruggiero, passed the Senate on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 36 yeas, 0 nays and 2 members not voting and passed the House on 6/15/2023 with a vote of 68 yeas, 0 nays, and 7 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/24/2023 and became law.

These bills would for purposes of teachers' retirement benefits, amend the definition of "former spouse divorced" to include someone who was married to a deceased member for ten (10) or more years and the deceased member was required by court order to contribute support post-divorce. It would also include the "former spouse divorced" in the spouse and domestic partner's benefits statute.

Teacher / Correctional Officer Service – Retirement

[H 5195](#), which was introduced by Representative McEntee, passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 71 yeas, 0 nays, and 5 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/14/2023, with a vote of 35 yeas, 0 nays, and 3 members not voting. It was effective without the Governor's signature and became law.

[S 0223](#), which was introduced by Senator DiMario, passed the Senate on 6/6/2023, with a vote of 37 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 member not voting and passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 70 yeas, 0 nays, and 5 members not voting. It was effective without the Governor's signature on 6/23/23 and became law.

These bills would allow any member who has rendered service both as a teacher under § 16-16-12, and service as a correctional officer under § 36-10-9.2(a), would be eligible to elect to combine the member's service under § 16-16-12 to determine the member's retirement eligibility date under § 16-16-12.

State Deferred Compensation Plans - Municipal Employees

[H 5374-A](#), which was introduced by Representative Casey, passed the Senate on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 37 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 member not voting and passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 69 yeas, 0 nays, and 6 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/24/2023 and became law.

[S 0228-A](#), which was introduced by Senator Murray, passed the Senate on 6/14/2023, with a vote of 36 yeas, 0 nays, and 2 members not voting and passed the House on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 72 yeas, 0 nays, and 3 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/20/2023 and became law.

These bills would provide that effective January 1, 2024, any participating municipality as defined in § 45-21-2 may elect to offer to its employees the deferred compensation plans offered by the state. The account of any municipal employee who participates in the state deferred compensation plan would be subject to the same administration, rules, and regulations as are applicable and applied to the accounts of employees in the state deferred compensation plan.

Apprenticeship Pathways To Earning A Bachelor's Degree

[H 6477](#), which was introduced by Representative McNamara, passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 69 yeas, 0 nays, and 5 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/14/2023, with a vote of 35 yeas, 0 nays, and 3 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/21/2023 and became law.

[S 0178](#), which was introduced by Senator Gallo, passed the Senate on 4/27/2023, with a vote of 36 yeas, 0 nays, and 2 members not voting and passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 67 yeas, 0 nays, and 7 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/21/2023 and became law.

These bills would create the Apprenticeship Pathways to Earning a Bachelor's Degree Act, to enable an individual to earn a bachelor's degree at public higher education institutions throughout the state by earning credits through apprenticeships.

Student Excused Absences - Agricultural Fairs

[H 6507](#), which was introduced by Representative Cotter, passed the House on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 69 yeas, 0 nays, and 6 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/16/2023, with a vote of 35 yeas, 1 nays, and 2 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/26/2023 and became law.

[S 0483](#), which was introduced by Senator Sosnowski, passed the Senate on 6/8/2023, with a vote of 37 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 members not voting and passed the House on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 63 yeas, 7 nays, and 5 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/26/2023 and became law.

These bills would provide that school policies which provide for excused absences for participation in a sport or other extracurricular activity would be amended and deemed to include attending agricultural fairs as an excused absence.

School Committees Policy Manual Availability

[S 0494-aa](#), which was introduced by Senator Gallo, passed the Senate on 6/8/2023, with a vote of 30 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 members not voting and passed the House on 6/12/2023, with a vote of 72 yeas, 0 nays, and 3 members not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/19/2023 and became law.

[H 5671-A](#), which was introduced by Representative Baginski, passed the House on 6/7/2023, with a vote of 61 yeas, 7 nays, and 7 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/13/2023, with a vote of 37 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 member not voting. It was signed by the Governor on 6/19/2023 and became law.

These bills would repeal the requirement that the school committee policy manual be kept in the school library, public library and Administrative building and require that the manual be made available on the school district website. Provided, a school or school district comprehensive school safety plan would not be made available to the public on a school or school district website.

School Social Worker and Psychologist Medicaid Reimbursement

[H 5010-aa](#), which was introduced by Representative McNamara, passed the House on 4/18/2023, was a vote of 66 yeas, 2 nays and 7 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 34 yeas, 1 nays and 3 members not voting.

[S 0869-A](#), which was introduced by Senator Cano, passed the Senate on 6/14/2023, with a vote of 33 yeas, 2 nays and 2 members not voting and passed the House on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 72 yeas, 0 nays and 3 members not voting.

These bills would require that services provided by school social workers and certified school psychologists be included as health care related services eligible for federal Medicaid reimbursement.

Council On Elementary and Secondary Education - Teacher of the Year

[H 6052-A](#), which was introduced by Representative Cortvriend, passed the House on 5/4/2023, with a vote of 67 yeas, 0 nays and 8 members not voting and passed the Senate on 6/16/2023, with a vote of 35 yeas, 1 nays and 2 members not voting.

[S 0182-A](#), which was introduced by Senator DiMario, passed the Senate on 6/15/2023, with a vote of 37 yeas, 0 nays and 1 member not voting and passed the House on 6/16/2023, with a vote of 58 yeas, 0 nays and 17 members not voting.

These bills would add the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year as an additional ex-officio member of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education as well as the Board of Education. These bills would also provide that where the current Rhode Island Teacher of the Year is unable or unwilling to serve on the Board of Education a former Rhode Island Teacher of the Year could be selected to serve on the board by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, as long as the individual is still teaching in a Rhode Island Public Schools.

Special Elections

There will be two special elections this fall. The election to replace David Ciciline as US Representative for the first Congressional District will be held on **Tuesday, November 7**. Also on November 7, voters in Senate District 1 will elect someone to replace the late Senator Maryellen Goodwin. The primaries for those elections, if necessary, will be held on **Tuesday, September 5**, which is the day after Labor Day.

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