
The
SMITH HILL REPORT



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Budget Article Highlights

On Thursday, January 16, 2025, the Governor had his budget proposal introduced as legislation. [2025-H 5076](#) was sponsored by House Finance Committee Chair Marvin Abney. The components of the bill will be subject to hearings over the next two months in the House Finance Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

The budget bill is composed of proposed state appropriations for all departments and agencies in Article 1. The other budget articles contain changes in statutory language related to State spending. There were several proposals in the 12 Budget Articles impacting RIFTHP members. Below are items of interest related to the Budget Articles. More information about proposed State spending will be covered by future issues of the Smith Hill Report.

Article 2 – State Funds

State Surplus Redirection – At the close of FY 24, half of the surplus that is supposed to be deposited into the ERSRI account would be available to be spent (Section 3, page 51).

Article 3 – Government Reform and Reorganization

Office of Internal Audits and Program Integrity – Changes the title of the Office of Internal Audits and commits the office to investigate waste, fraud and abuse (Section 11, page 80).
State Facilities Benchmarking and Performance Standards Program – Creates energy standards and process for all state-owned and state-occupied buildings to address energy usage (Section 15, page 89).

Article 4 – Debt Management

URI Student Wellness Center – Authorizes increased bond size, including debt service for renovations and expansion to the URI Memorial Union (Section 2, page 107).

Article 5 – Taxes and Fees

Extend Wavemaker Scholarship Program – Extends the sunset from December 31, 2025, to December 31, 2026. This program funds loan forgiveness for certain professionals including teachers and nurses (Section 11, page 181).

Article 7 – Education

Student Success Factor Increase – Increases funding of students in poverty by raising the Student Success Factor in Education Funding Formula by 3% (Section 1, page 184).

Charter School Funding – Limits the amount of money school districts can deduct from Mayoral Academy charter school tuition payments to 14%, shifting money from school districts to Mayoral Academies (Section 1, page 186).

Mayoral Academy Chairperson – Removes requirement that a Mayor Chair the Board governing a Mayoral Academy (Section 2, page 187).

Senate Committees

The Senate has announced the formation of a new Committee on Artificial Intelligence. The Senate has also announced Committee membership for the 2025 and 2026. A list of Committee members can be [viewed here](#).

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