

*The*

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Student Discipline

On Wednesday, April 1, 2015 the RIFTHP raised objections to a student discipline bill promoted by the ACLU. The legislation, [S0299](#) is identical to a House bill introduced by Rep. John Lombardi [H5383](#). The bill would require that school districts examine student discipline data to determine if there is a disproportionate impact on students based on race, ethnicity or disability status.

The RIFTHP did not object to the review of data, but we did object to teachers not being included in any planned revisions to student discipline codes based on the proposed data review. James Parisi, RIFTHP lobbyist, noted that while a review of data is important, student learning would suffer if discipline enforcement is watered down as a result of the legislation. Parisi also objected to a portion of the bill that would ban out-of-school suspension in all cases except when a student is chronically disruptive.

Standardized Testing – Opt-Out

A lengthy hearing was held on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 by the House HEW Committee on legislation related to standardized testing. [H5845](#) by Rep. Amore would place in state law a requirement that RIDE develop and disseminate forms describing how parents can opt-out of the PARCC test or other similar assessments. The legislation also contains a provision that students would not face disciplinary action for opting out of the test.

There was compelling testimony offered by half-dozen parents from various Rhode Island communities and

April 8, 2015

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one high school student in support of the bill. Many noted the conflicting information given out by school administrators on the ability of parents to opt-out of PARCC testing and the potential consequences.

James Parisi, RIFTHP lobbyist, testified in support of the bill. He noted that the bill merely confirms what we all know, and that is parents hold rights to keep their children from taking standardized tests.

Previous witnesses had testified that students have taken standardized tests for a long time, from recent NECAP tests to IOWA tests decades ago. Parisi reminded the committee that the recent tests have consequences for students and teachers that previous standardized tests never had. Examples include the PARCC test now or in the near future affecting student graduation, grading schools, reconstituting schools and staff, and impacting teacher employment and certification.

Other supporters of the legislation included the NEA/RI and the ACLU. Opponents to the bill included RIDE, the Superintendents' Association, the School Committees' Association, RI-CAN, and Kids Count.



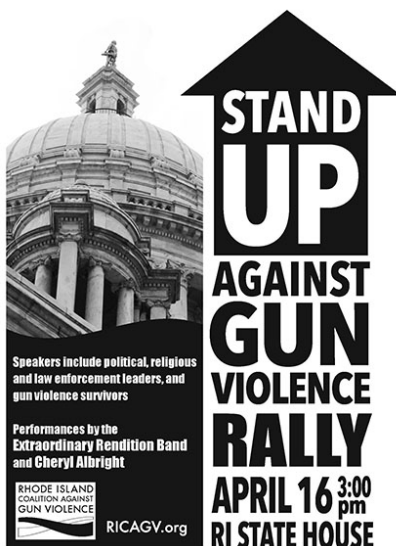
LaborVision is seen on Cox
Ch. 14 and FioS Ch. 33

Tuesday @ 7PM

Thursday @ 7PM

Saturday @ 5PM

Rally Against Hand Gun Violence



A rally against gun violence sponsored by the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence, RICAGV.org, is being held at the State House on Thursday, April 16th at 3:00pm. The rally is to show support for a number of bills including [H5861](#) which the RIFTHP supports. This bill would prevent those with concealed carry permits from possessing guns on

school grounds.

Speakers include political, religious and law enforcement leaders, and gun violence survivors.

Performances by the Extraordinary Rendition Band

and Cheryl Albright.

Please spread the word and make every effort to attend.

Bill Introductions

Tax Equity – School Construction

([S0473](#) *Satchell, Senate Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would impose a two percent (2%) tax increase on personal income over two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) beginning January 1, 2016. The revenue collected therefrom would be deposited into a restricted account to pay for public school construction and maintenance.

Public Records - School Staff Evaluations

([S0667](#) *Gallo, Senate Judiciary*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would exclude as public records any individually identifiable evaluations, made pursuant to state or federal law or regulation, of public school superintendents, administrators, principals and all other school employees.

Mayoral Charter School Pension Participation

([S0700](#) *Jabour, Senate Education*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would change mayoral academy teachers' and administrators' participation in the state retirement system from voluntary to mandatory.

Charter School Local Approval – Funding Freeze

([S0739](#) *Pearson, Senate Education*)

The RIFTHP supports this act which would limit the total funding for charter schools in 2016 to the amount funded in 2015 and would require school committees and town or city council approval for the creation of charter schools in their jurisdiction.

Tax Equity – Municipal Aid

([H6023](#) *Newberry, House Health, Education and Welfare*)

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.

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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