

The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Private Record Privacy Expansion

Two years ago, the RIFTHP was successful in gaining passage of specific state law sponsored by Senator Hanna Gallo to ensure that teacher evaluations would be private records not subject to public record requests. The issue arose as other states permitted evaluation records to be made public, sometimes with tragic results. Historically, Rhode Island public employee evaluations have been held to be private records but federal guidelines employ a balance test to determine if the records should be made public. Legislation was introduced this year to expand that protection to school administrators and all other school support staff.

On May 5, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony on [S0667](#) by Senator Gallo to expand the privacy protection of evaluations. RIFTHP lobbyist James Parisi testified in support of the bill. He thanked the Committee for its past support of the teacher privacy legislation and urged support of the expansion of such protection. The RIFTHP represents close to 1,000 school support staff who would benefit from the privacy the legislation would offer. He told the Committee that there is no legitimate reason that private personnel records such as evaluations should be made public. Also testifying in support of the legislation was Tim Duffy of the RI School Committees' Association and Tim Ryan of the RI Superintendents' Association.

On May 11, 2015 the Senate Judiciary met to consider S0667 and voted unanimously to support the bill. The legislation will be considered by the full Senate at a later date.

May 18, 2015

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Higher Education Performance Based Funding Bill Approved By Committee

The Senate Education Committee adopted an amended version of Senate President Paiva-Weed's Performance Based Funding legislation for public higher education. The bill, [S0603A](#), was amended to require student participation in the development of the performance funding metrics. The bill was also amended to require that the goals developed for each college be consistent with the institution's mission.

This was done in response to concerns faculty raised about liberal arts degrees being undervalued as performance based funding is implemented in Rhode Island.

The most beneficial aspect of the legislation is the requirement that the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, working with faculty and staff, would develop a funding formula for public higher education.

That formula would then be presented to the General Assembly for action. Rhode Island ranks 45th among states in state support for public colleges and universities.



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

Tuesday @ 7PM

Thursday @ 7PM

Saturday @ 5PM

Fair Funding Formula Study Commission Report

The Study Commission reviewing the education funding formula is poised to issue its final report. The Commission met on Thursday, May 14 to consider a draft report. RIFTHP President Frank Flynn serves on the Commission and thanked Chair Rep. Jay O'Grady and other participants for the thorough review of education financing as it relates to Rhode Island charter schools. The final report will include data indicating circumstances in which charter schools get extra funding when considering actual expenses of the schools. The RIDE representative registered formal objection to the tone of the report. There was some media coverage of the Commission's work ([click here](#) for the Channel 10 story).

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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