

The

SMITH HILL REPORT



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Concealed Firearms in Schools

The Senate Judiciary Committee took testimony on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 on numerous bills seeking to change gun laws. The Statehouse attracted a huge crowd of proponents and opponents of gun control legislation. Pro-gun supporters outnumbered the gun control advocates on March 6th. Those seeking more gun control are hosting a statehouse rally in conjunction with a student rally on March 14th.

The RIFTHP offered written [testimony](#), on one bill considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Legislation introduced by Senator Harold Metts seeks to close a loophole in the law. The current law allows those with a permit to carry a concealed weapon, to bring the weapon onto school grounds. This bill would prevent those with concealed carry permits from bringing firearms onto school grounds unless they were police officers.

In supporting the bill, [S2289](#), RIFHP President Frank Flynn wrote that “any measure that enhances safer schools and safer workplaces for teachers and school support staff should be approved”.

There will be heightened interest in school safety measures this session. Many public school advocates, school staff, and school committees have supported this legislation related to firearms on school grounds.

Bill Introductions

Arbitrator Selection Process

[\(H7796 Shekarchi, House Labor\)](#)

The RIFTHP opposes this bill which would replace the American Arbitration Association, as the selector of labor arbitrators, in non-grievance contract matters, with the director of the department of labor and training. The director's selection would be limited to retired Rhode Island judges, retired Rhode Island magistrates, or members of the Rhode Island bar association for firefighter, police, teacher and municipal employee matters.

Tax Equity

[\(H7815 Regunberg, House Finance\)](#)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would add a personal income tax bracket of 8.99% for income over one million dollars (\$1,000,000).

Tax Equity

[\(H7886\)](#) *Barros, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would add three (3) new income tax brackets for purposes of Rhode Island state income taxation. The new brackets would be a rate of 7.99% on taxable income over \$275,000 but not over \$500,000, a rate of 8.49% on taxable income over \$500,000 but not over \$1,000,000, and a rate of 8.99% on taxable income over \$1,000,000.

Resolution – DSP Wage Increase

[\(H7853\)](#) *Tanzi, House Labor*)

The RIFTHP supports this Resolution which would urge the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to increase certain direct and home care worker wages.

MS/HS School Resource Officers

[\(H7854\)](#) *Phillips, House Judiciary*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would establish a program for the training and assignment of school resource officers to middle and high schools.

Extended School Hours – High School Libraries

[\(H7872\)](#) *Tanzi, House Health, Education and Welfare*)

The RIFTHP opposes this bill which would provide that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education in setting standards for school libraries and services would at a minimum provide that secondary school students have access to libraries one hour before school, during school and for one hour after school. The bill does not provide state funding for any costs associated with the extended hours.

Charter School Expansion Impact – Auditor General

[\(H7885\)](#) *Barros, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would provide that the Office of the Auditor General be responsible for analyzing and reporting the impact of new or expanded charter schools.

Carried Interest

[\(H7629\)](#) *Regunberg, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would establish a nineteen percent (19%) carried interest fairness fee for investment management services in order to tax the carried interest income of hedge fund and private equity investors as traditional ordinary earned income.

Teacher Bill of Rights

[\(H7898\)](#) *O'Brien, House Health, Education and Welfare*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would create a comprehensive bill of rights for school teachers.

Safe Schools Program – School Resource Officers

([H7919](#) *Amore, House Finance*)

The RIFTHP supports this bill which would establish a process of funding and ensuring that our public schools remain safer and secure. The safe school program would require that a certified school resource officer be employed at each public school and would allow for each school department to seek an additional five percent (5%) reimbursement for school construction projects related to safety.

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