

H7899  
Support  
Jennifer Lima

I am writing today to support House Bill 7899 which would require the name of any non credentialed school employee who is terminated for good and just cause, to be furnished to the department of education.

I am a member of the North Kingstown School Committee. Last year we unanimously approved a resolution in support of this piece of legislation when it was introduced because it closes a gap that currently exists in the law.

In 2022 a section was added to RIGL 16-13 which requires after certain conditions are met that the Rhode Island Department of Education shall maintain a list of those teachers who have been terminated for good and just cause and shall update the list monthly to include the names of any additional teachers submitted pursuant to the provisions of the section. This list of terminated teachers is accessible only to the hiring authority of any private, parochial, charter, or public school.

This was a good and necessary thing, but it didn't go far enough in protecting students. Teachers are not the only people in the school district. There are other employees who do not hold any type of certification who - if terminated for inappropriate behavior with a student that doesn't rise to the level of a criminal offense - could be working in another district with the administrators there none the wiser.

If there is someone that we have determined should not be around OUR students, then they shouldn't be around any students. Or at the very least, it should be a conscious decision by the hiring district to place them there. The list of teachers who have been terminated for good and just cause is maintained for a reason. Please extend that law to include non credentialed employees as well.

Thank you.  
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