



**RHODE ISLAND  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT AFL-CIO**

To: House Finance Committee  
 From: James Parisi, Field Representative  
 Date: April 25, 2024  
 Re: **State Employee Longevity Restoration**  
 Testimony in support of 2024-H 7249 (Corvese et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports Representative Corvese’s bill to re-establish state employee longevity payment. The RIFTHP represents state workers at RIDE, the Judiciary, DCYF, Department of Corrections and RIC who experienced a serious reduction in lifetime earnings in 2011 when the Assembly eliminated a well-established longevity compensation system throughout state government.

Longevity existed by virtue of state law, state personnel rules and collective bargaining agreements. In 2011, Article 8 of the state budget froze existing longevity payments, outlawed future longevity increases, and prevented state employee unions from negotiating longevity payments. State employee longevity payments had provided increases in employee salary based on years of service expressed as a percentage of income. The system provided for raises as follows:

5 Years	5%
11 years	10%
15 years	15%
20 years	17.5%
25 years	20%

Over a career, a state worker hired after 2011 will earn 20% less than a person who had reached 25 years of service in 2011. This permanent reduction in the earnings of state workers contributes to the difficulty the State is having in filling vacancies.

The RIFTHP opposed the Assembly reduction in state employee salaries in 2011 and ask that this Assembly reverse course and recognize the importance of fair compensation for public sector workers. While H 7249 does not re-establish the full benefits in place in 2011, it is a major step in the right direction. **We urge passage of H 7249.** We also ask that you clarify that public sector unions could bargain over a longevity system in future negotiations to permit us to restore all of the benefits in place prior to 2011.

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