



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ^{AFT}_{AFL-CIO}

To: House Finance Committee
From: James Parisi, Field Representative
Date: April 22, 2025
Re: **Scope of Bargaining-Longevity**
Testimony in **support** of 2025-H 5530 (Rep. Corvese et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports Representative Corvese's legislation to permit state government and state government unions to negotiate longevity pay. The bill would not immediately restore state worker longevity pay but would simply permit labor and management to negotiate longevity pay in future collective bargaining.

The bill states that longevity pay is within the scope of issues to be considered in collective bargaining. Longevity pay is an additional payment to employees based on years of service. It is a common feature in public and private sector labor contracts and is a means to support retention of existing employees.

H 5530 is necessary because the Assembly, during a financial crisis, eliminated longevity pay for state workers in 2011. The Assembly not only stopped the payments but put into statute language preventing longevity pay in the future.

Previous versions of this bill restored longevity payments. H 5530 takes a new approach. It merely permits negotiations of state worker longevity by the parties. Without agreement of both labor and management, there will be no changes to state worker pay structures.

The RIFTHP believes that the state should seriously consider longevity pay to address staff shortages that exist in some sectors of state government. Considering that current state employee hires will be paid up to 20% less than senior staff because of the loss of longevity pay, it is no wonder prospective workers hesitate to work for state government.

The RIFTHP urges support of H 5530.

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