



April 16, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7053 - AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' RETIREMENT

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express our concern regarding House Bill 7053, which proposes revising the rules governing creditable service within the Teachers' Retirement System for members who take unpaid parental or medical leave.

While the League supports policies that recognize the importance of parental and medical leave and the need to maintain a strong and stable public education workforce, we have concerns regarding the potential long-term fiscal implications of this proposal for the state pension system and, by extension, for municipal and state employers.

This legislation would expand the circumstances under which a teacher may receive a full year of service credit, even when the individual has not rendered service for the entirety of the school year due to extended unpaid leave. As a result, the proposal may increase the accumulation of qualifying service credits within the retirement system without a corresponding period of service or contribution, thereby potentially increasing long-term pension liabilities.

The League notes that the language may benefit from further clarification, particularly regarding how service credit is to be administered in coordination with existing ERSRI practices. This ambiguity underscores the importance of ensuring that any changes to service credit rules are clearly defined and consistently applied within the retirement system.

For this reason, the League agrees with the State Treasurer's request that this proposal be accompanied by a pension impact note. The League respectfully requests that any consideration of this legislation include a comprehensive actuarial analysis to ensure full transparency regarding its long-term fiscal impact. Such information is essential to allow policymakers to make informed decisions consistent with the long-term stability of the retirement system.

We appreciate the intent behind the legislation and the recognition of the challenges faced by educators during periods of parental or medical leave. However, we believe that any expansion of pension credit eligibility should be carefully evaluated in light of its fiscal implications.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued partnership with Rhode Island's municipalities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.R.R.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Finance Committee