



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

To: House Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: June 2, 2026
Re: Right to Bargain Longevity
Testimony in **Support of H 7055** (Corvese, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of H 7055, legislation that restores the ability of state union employees to negotiate longevity payments through the collective bargaining process.

Beginning in 2011, state employees were prohibited from negotiating future longevity increases regardless of workforce needs, retention challenges, or negotiated agreements between employees and employers. H 7055 appropriately restores the right of workers and employers to negotiate these provisions through collective bargaining agreements beginning July 1, 2026.

Longevity pay recognizes the value of experienced public employees who dedicate years of service to Rhode Island and its public institutions. Experienced employees provide institutional knowledge, continuity, mentorship, and expertise that strengthen public services for Rhode Islanders.

Importantly, this legislation does not mandate longevity payments. It simply restores the ability for these provisions to be negotiated at the bargaining table by the parties directly affected. Compensation and retention incentives should remain subject to collective bargaining rather than statutory prohibition.

Allowing longevity to be negotiated also supports workforce stability and retention at a time when many public sector employers continue to face recruitment and retention challenges.

Rhode Island has long recognized collective bargaining as a fundamental component of fair labor relations. H 7055 respects that principle by allowing workers and employers to negotiate compensation structures that best meet operational and workforce needs.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H 7055.

356 SMITH STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-3761 (401) 273-9800 FAX (401) 331-8815

• **Maribeth K. Calabro**, President • **Maria Manzi**, Executive Assistant • **Bridget McDonough**, Administrative Assistant •
• **Michael J. Mullane**, Field Representative • **James A. Parisi**, Field Representative •
• **Christopher Lambert**, Field Representative • **Jeremy Sencer**, Field Representative •
• **Sean Doyle**, Field Representative •