



We Make Rhode Island Happen

AFSCME Rhode Island Council 94

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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MEMO TO: House Judiciary Committee Members

MEMO FROM: Jim Cenerini, Legislative Affairs/Political Action Coordinator

DATE: February 8, 2024

RE: Oppose H-7198, H-7312, & H-7313

Rhode Island Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, respectfully opposes H-7198, H-7312, & H-7313.

Council 94 proudly represents many types of Law Enforcement/Peace Officers, including: Deputy Sheriffs, Capitol Police, Environmental Police, Airport Police, University Armed Police, and Campus Police.

The law enforcement officers represented by Council 94 are fully sworn/ trained by the Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy and/or their own agency's academy.

Currently, Environmental and Airport Police Officers are covered by the Law Officers' Bill of Rights.

Council 94, opposes H-7198, H-7312, & H-7313 because:

1. Police Officers deserve to be adjudicated by their peers, which compose a majority of the hearing board, similar to other professionals such as attorneys, doctors, and/or the military. The Bill of Rights current hearing structure is composed of Police Officers because of the difficulties and challenges that face law enforcement professionals face every day.
2. The legislation curtails the scope of bargaining and limits the hearing board's, acting as an impartial body, ability to modify disciplinary action.
3. Expands the initial discipline that that can be imposed up to a 14 day suspension without pay prior to the triggering of the Police Officers' Bill of Rights Hearing Process.
4. Changing the composition of the hearing board to non-police officer(s) majority is a matter of grave concern.
5. Deeming internal affairs reports public records would certainly impact an officer, accused of any misconduct, right to due process.

Council 94 is aware of the sensitivity surrounding the proposed legislation. While AFSCME has a long and well documented history of active participation in the Civil Rights Movement, we must remain respectfully opposed to the proposed legislation in the present form.

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