



AFSCME Rhode Island Council 94
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

1179 Charles Street, North Providence, RI 02904
Phone: (401) 724-5900 • Fax: (401) 724-2060 • www.ricouncil94.org

MEMO TO: House Judiciary Committee Members

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

DATE: April 13, 2021

RE: Oppose H-6152, H-6153, H-6104, & H-5613

Rhode Island Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, respectfully opposes H-6152, H-6153, H-6104, and H-5613.

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-6152, H-6153, H-6104, and H-5613 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 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 30 days. Council 94 believes the proposed legislation allow officers to be terminated prior to any due process.
4. H-5613 altered hearing board composition is concerning.
5. Council 94's main objection to H-6104 is that empowering the Commission on Standards and Training to revoke a law enforcement officer's certification may expose them to double jeopardy. It is also unclear on how the Commission's powers would interface with the Police Officers' Bill of Rights hearing 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.

###