

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chair
House Labor Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7042– RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- LABOR RELATIONS ACT

Dear Chairman Corvese and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express our opposition to House Bill 7042, which would authorize the right to strike for public sector employees, including certified public-school teachers.

At the outset, the League would like to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for the dedicated public sector workforce that serves our communities each and every day. This includes our teachers, who are responsible for educating and supporting our cities and towns' most valuable resource, our students. Their contributions are essential to the strength, vitality, and future of Rhode Island's communities, and we recognize the importance of ensuring that public employees are treated fairly and with respect in the collective bargaining process.

However, the League has significant concerns with the proposal to permit strikes among public sector employees. Rhode Island's longstanding framework governing labor relations for municipal employees, including teachers, has been carefully structured to balance the rights of employees with the critical need to maintain uninterrupted public services. The existing arbitration processes were designed specifically to prevent labor disputes from disrupting essential services that residents rely upon.

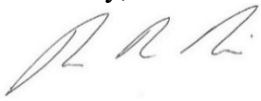
Allowing public sector strikes would represent a fundamental shift in this balance. For municipalities, the potential for work stoppages raises serious concerns regarding continuity of operations, public safety, and the delivery of core services. In the context of public education, teacher strikes would directly impact students and families, creating uncertainty and disruption in the classroom and placing additional burdens on working parents and local communities.

While we respect the intent of the legislation to strengthen the position of public employees in labor negotiations, the League believes that the current system, particularly binding arbitration, provides an appropriate and effective mechanism for resolving disputes without jeopardizing the public interest.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns respectfully opposes House Bill 7042 and urges the Committee to consider the broader implications this policy change would have on municipalities and the residents they serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. R. Rossi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Labor Committee