



March 16, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2026 – H 7127, An Act Making Appropriations for the Support of the State for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2027, Article 3, Section 1.

Senator DiPalma,

The National Governors Association (NGA) respectfully provides the following information as context to the debate currently underway regarding a possible line-item veto in Rhode Island. In general, the line-item veto gives an executive the authority to nullify or cancel specific provisions of a bill, most often in an appropriations measure, without vetoing the entire legislative package. This authority is typically grounded in a state constitution and is generally subject to legislative override, much like a traditional veto. Governors have used line-item veto authority for a range of purposes, including promoting fiscal restraint and advancing policy priorities.

Across the states, line-item or partial veto authority is common. Forty-four states provide their Governors with some form of line-item or partial veto power. The six states where the Governor does not currently have line-item veto power are Indiana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Vermont. In evaluating this authority, two issues are especially important: first, what qualifies as an appropriations bill, and second, what qualifies as an item within such a bill. Those distinctions often shape the practical scope of a Governor's authority and can vary significantly from state to state.

Among the states with line-item veto authority, 34 Governors may veto specific appropriation amounts, while 22 Governors may veto appropriations language. Override thresholds also vary. In 35 states, a two-thirds vote of the legislature is required to override a veto; in eight states, a three-fifths vote is required; in one state, a three-fourths vote is required; and in seven states, only a majority vote is needed. These variations illustrate that while line-item veto authority is widely used, states have adopted different constitutional and statutory approaches to defining its reach and the balance between the executive and legislative branches.

In conclusion, the line-item veto is a commonly provided tool in state budget processes. We hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Tatum". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Brandon Tatum
Chief Executive Officer
National Governors Association