



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

To: Senate Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: May 28, 2026
Re: Public Pension Income Exemption
Testimony in **Support of S 3129** (Thompson, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of S 3129, legislation that exempts public pension benefits administered by the Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island from state income taxation.

Rhode Island's retired public employees dedicated their careers to serving students, patients, families, and communities across the state. Educators, school staff, nurses, and other public servants earned these pension benefits through years of public service and consistent contributions into the retirement system. Taxing those benefits places an additional financial burden on retirees living on fixed incomes at a time of rising housing, healthcare, and everyday living costs.

S 3129 would provide meaningful financial relief to retired public employees while recognizing the value of public service work. Many neighboring states already provide broader pension tax exemptions, and Rhode Island should remain competitive in retaining and supporting the public workforce that communities depend on. This policy also helps strengthen retirement security for current and future public employees considering long-term careers in public education and public service.

From the perspective of educators and school employees, retirement stability is directly connected to workforce recruitment and retention. Employees are more likely to remain in public service when they believe the state will honor and protect the retirement benefits they earned over decades of work.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support S 3129.

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 •