



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

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Frank Flynn, RIFTHP, President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Flynn".

Date: February 27, 2024

Re: Criminal Offenses-Threats and Extortion

Testimony in Support of 2024 H 7303 (Noret, et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports Representative Noret's legislation H7303 which would include school superintendents, principals, central office officials, and all other school employees including teachers in the definition section of RIGL 11-42-4 for the purpose of protection as a "public official."

There is currently a super-charged, highly toxic culture toward public servants, both elected and non-elected, throughout our society. This behavior has manifested itself at public events, meetings, and hearings at an alarming rate. This lack of civility has made it difficult and, in some instances, impossible for public bodies to conduct public business in an orderly democratic manner. This behavior in some cases has risen to a level in which people's physical and emotional well-being has been threatened.

This abhorrent behavior has recently become commonplace at many school related events and meetings. This includes not only board meetings and assemblies but in school offices and school yards.

We want to thank Rep. Noret and the other sponsors of this bill. This bill would provide the same statutory protections for school employees that are currently provided to other public officials in the event that they are verbally or physically threatened.

Thank you for your consideration, we urge you to support this bill.

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