



To: House Judiciary Committee
 From: James Parisi, Field Representative
 Date: February 4, 2025
 Re: **Threats Against School Officials – Felony**
 Testimony in **support** of 2025-H 5262

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports H 5262 by Representative Noret. We had supported similar legislation that he sponsored last session, which passed this Committee and passed the House on a 50-17 vote last May. The RIFTHP was a proponent of the bill in 2024 and we ask this Committee’s support of the bill in 2025.

The bill adds to the definition of public officials in the statute “*or in the case of schools, a school superintendent, central office official, school principal, and all other school employees.*” Though the bill was initiated by school superintendents who have received threats in recent years, the RIFTHP appreciates the addition of all school employees to the definition of public official so that our members could be protected by the statute.

This statute would only be triggered if a person “*knowingly and willfully delivers or conveys, directly or indirectly, a verbal or written threat to take the life of, or to inflict bodily harm upon, a public official or a member of his or her immediate family....*” This is a serious allegation, and a person found guilty should receive an appropriate punishment. The RIFTHP believes that prosecutors should have the ability to impose the heightened penalties contained in this bill. The enhanced penalty would be an effective deterrent to threats against school officials.

We have witnessed increased anger by the public, directed towards school superintendents and other school employees. When this anger manifests itself as threats to kill or inflict bodily harm, a response is required. H 5262 is an appropriate response that protects school officials from such threats.

The RIFTHP urges support of the legislation.