



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ^{AFT}_{AFL - CIO}

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, Field Representative
Date: April 2, 2026
Re: **Armed Campus Police**

Testimony in **Opposition** to 2026-S 2053 (Senator Appollonio, et al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP) opposes S 2053, legislation that requires firearm training for campus police and expands their status under the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights, effectively moving Rhode Island’s public colleges and universities toward an armed campus policing model.

Faculty at Rhode Island College, represented by RIC/AFT Local 1819, have expressed concerns about proposals of this nature based on their experience working directly with students and campus safety personnel. Expanding the role of armed enforcement on campus may negatively impact student trust and willingness to engage with campus services, particularly among populations already less likely to interact with law enforcement.

S 2053 establishes a statewide approach rather than allowing institutions to determine safety strategies based on campus-specific needs. Existing campus safety models often rely on unarmed campus policing, coordination with local law enforcement, and prevention-focused strategies.

The legislation also expands Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights protections to campus police. This raises concerns about accountability and consistency across public-sector employees, as these protections exceed those available to many other campus workers, including educators.

There are also fiscal considerations associated with implementation, including training, equipment, and ongoing operational costs. These expenditures should be weighed against alternative investments that support student safety and well-being.

The RIFTHP urges opposition to the legislation.

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