



OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR  
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July 14, 2017

The Honorable Governor, Gina M. Raimondo  
State House - RM - 224  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Governor Raimondo:

The General Assembly has passed legislation that would automatically extend collective bargaining agreements for municipal employees and teachers after expiration (H5593 Sub A). Because it would limit the ability of local officials to negotiate in the best interests of taxpayers, I respectfully request that you veto the perpetual contracts bill.

The expiration date of collective bargaining agreements is an important component of contract negotiations. It motivates the parties to come together and resolve their issues prior to the close of the contract. If for some reason, the parties do not complete negotiations prior to the contract expiration, we have always agreed to continue their contract terms when negotiations are held in good faith. For that reason alone, this legislation is unnecessary.

Automatic contract extensions would create a further imbalance in a system that already favors the rights of employees over those of management and local property taxpayers. Employees would have no incentive to renegotiate a contract if they expected to make concessions on wages, health care or work conditions. Perpetual contracts will limit municipal leaders' ability to promote efficient and cost-effective government in contrast to the escalating cost of many employee benefits. Passage of these bills will ultimately lead to higher costs to taxpayers.

I have been working hard for over a decade to control property tax growth through fair and constructive negotiations between management and labor upon the expiration of contracts between the parties. Perpetual contracts would undermine those efforts, and I again ask that you veto this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

  
T. Joseph Almond  
Town Administrator