



Smithfield School Department

Administration Office
49 Farnum Pike
Smithfield, RI 02917
(401) 231-6606 / Fax (401) 232-0870
www.smithfield-ps.org

Judith Paolucci, Ph. D.
Superintendent

Sara Monaco, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent

Amend Article I Resolution

WHEREAS: Article I, entitled Declaration of Certain Constitutional Rights and Principles, was first adopted in 1843 and;

WHEREAS: In 1993, the Massachusetts Supreme Court found that the Commonwealth had a constitutional duty "to ensure the education of its children in the public schools." Shortly thereafter, the Massachusetts Legislature passed, and then Governor Weld signed into law the Education Reform Act. Massachusetts also provided an additional \$2 billion in school aid over several years. The Reform Act ushered in an era of accountability, and the increase in funding significantly narrowed the achievement gap.

WHEREAS: In 1995, the Rhode Island Supreme Court held, in a lawsuit brought by the Pawtucket and Woonsocket school districts, that "... the education clause did not intend to guarantee an "equal, adequate, and meaningful" education because both at the time article 12 was adopted, and for decades afterward, there was no requirement that public education be provided at all in this state."

WHEREAS: In 2014 the Rhode Island Supreme Court reaffirmed their 1995, ruling, in a suit again brought by the Pawtucket and Woonsocket, but stated that "We emphasize that we are deeply concerned by the conditions of the schools in Pawtucket and Woonsocket..." and;

WHEREAS: We believe education should be fundamental right for all Rhode Island residents and;

WHEREAS: Representative Mary Messier and Senator Harold Metts have introduced 2020 – H 7575 and 2020 – S 2711, respective House and Senate Resolutions, that would amend Article I by adding **Section 24. Right to an adequate education.** "Public education is a fundamental right of all Rhode Island residents. It shall, therefore, be the paramount duty of the general assembly, the department of elementary and secondary education, and other government agencies and officials who are charged with educational responsibilities to provide all Rhode Island residents with equal opportunities to receive an education that is adequate and meaningful to permit them to achieve at high levels and to become lifelong learners, productive workers, and responsible citizens." and;

WHEREAS: Amending Article I would make education the paramount duty of the General Assembly and recognize that public education is a fundamental right.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Smithfield School Committee respectfully requests the Rhode Island General Assembly to pass 2020 – H 7575 and 2020 – S 2711 and cause a referendum amending Article I to place before voters at the November 3, 2020, general election; and be it further;

RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every Rhode Island Municipality, School Committee, State Senator, State Representative, and the Governor.

WHERETO: The following bear witness:

Rose Marie Cipriano
Chairperson/President

June 30, 2020
Date

RECEIVED
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JUDITH PAOLUCCI
TOWN CLERK