



TOWN OF CUMBERLAND

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

William S. Murray



George W. Stansfield, III
CHIEF OF STAFF

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July 6, 2017

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo, Governor
State of Rhode Island
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Veto -H5593-SUB A

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 tax payers, I respectfully request that you veto the perpetual contracts bill.

Many times that we have run into one another, you mention to me "Please call if you need my help" I am now calling on you pleading for your help. Please, for the sake of all municipalities and tax payer survival I ask that you veto the above referenced bill. In Cumberland, this year alone, we have two major contracts in negotiations. One being our School Teachers Contract the other being our Police Contract. This bill that unfortunately both the House and Senate passed, will tie our hands in negotiating on high healthcare, wages and work conditions. The schools alone are facing large deficits in the next five years. If we cannot negotiate for our tax payers - taxes will continue to rise hurting all Cumberland tax payers.

Automatic contract extension would provide greater leverage for employees at the expense of municipal officials and tax payers. Employees would have no incentive to renegotiate a contract if they expected to make concessions on wages, health care or work conditions. Both parties should be equally motivated to come to the table to renegotiate the contract, and extending contracts automatically and indefinitely through state law would disrupt that dynamic. Perpetual contracts will limit municipal leaders' ability to promote efficient and cost-effective government and will ultimately lead to higher costs to taxpayers.

Municipal leaders have been working hard to control property tax growth while providing important services to the public. 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,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William S. Murray".

William S. Murray
Mayor

cc: Brian Daniels, RI League of Cities and Towns