

LAW FOR LAYOFF NOTICE BY MARCH 1 IS RIDICULOUS – IN GIST



Deborah Gist, the Rhode Island Education Commissioner said on Friday that the state law demanding school committees to send layoff notices by March 1 to teachers is “*a ridiculous exercise that needs to be stopped.*” We agree, and read on to follow Deborah’s logic to find why. You’d find that the same situation applies to many states across the nation where education of children get affected amidst unnecessary stress created by obsolete and ridiculous requirements of law. The Rhode Island Education Commissioner went on to explain, “*This arbitrary deadline serves no purpose except to add to the stress of teachers who are working hard every day to provide our students with a world-class education.*” But that education giving does suffer, and our nation is hurt at its roots with this ridiculous requirement that creates a climate of doom. According to Gist the March 1 deadline is too early in the budgetary process and even when the school committees suspect many teachers would be ultimately retained, unpredictable situations and legal requirements force school committees to send layoff notices to teachers year after year. Though after every budget, the teachers happen to continue without job loss, the environment of instability causes school committees, and by extension the students, to lose talented instructors who seek alternatives to being annually threatened with regularity. **Gist says moving the deadline to send teacher layoff notices to June 1 would be in line with the budgetary process where the period of uncertainty would be reduced to acceptable proportions.** “*No educator or school-committee member takes any pleasure in the process of layoffs, but we can all agree that the process should be done in a way that is in line with the budget process, is fair to teachers, and is in the best interest of our students*” said Gist. In an open letter to the media Gist wrote succinctly, “*Laying off hundreds of educators because of an imposed notification deadline leads to undue stress and anxiety and can disrupt the process of teaching and learning. I do believe that teachers and other educators need to know in a timely manner when their jobs may be in jeopardy, but information they receive on March 1 is not meaningful. I support the proposed legislation from Sen. Louis P. DiPalma and Rep. J. Russell Jackson that would move the notification date to June 1, by which time school committees have much more information about their finances.*” The Woonsocket school committee sent layoff notices to the entire teaching staff of 600 in order to have the maximum flexibility to adjust budget shortfalls.

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