STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION -- STATEWIDE REFERENDUM

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Pearson, Cano, and Euer
Date Introduced: March 10, 2022
Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Proposition to be submitted to the people.
At the general election to be held on the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November 2022, there shall be submitted to the people ("People") of the State of Rhode Island ("State"), for their approval or rejection, the following proposition:

"Shall the action of the general assembly, by an act passed at the January 2022 session, authorizing the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes of the State of Rhode Island for the capital projects and in the amount with respect to each such project listed below be approved, and the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes authorized in accordance with the provisions of said act?"

Project
(2) Rhode Island School Buildings $250,000,000

Approval of this question will allow the state of Rhode Island to issue general obligation bonds, refunding bonds, and/or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed two hundred fifty million dollars ($250,000,000) to provide direct funding for school construction projects, such as the construction of new school facilities and the rehabilitation of existing school facilities.

SECTION 2. Section 16-7-40 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7 entitled "Foundation Level School Support [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:
16-7-40. Increased school housing ratio.

(a)(1) In the case of regional school districts, the school housing aid ratio shall be increased by two percent (2%) for each grade so consolidated.

(2) Regional school districts undertaking renovation project(s) shall receive an increased share ratio of four percent (4%) for those specific project(s) only, in addition to the combined share ratio calculated in § 16-7-39 and this subsection.

(b) In the case of projects undertaken by districts specifically for the purposes of school safety and security, the school housing aid share ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) for these specific projects only, in the calculation of school housing aid. The increased share ratio shall continue to be applied for as long as the project(s) receives state housing aid. In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, seventy-five percent (75%) of the project costs must be specifically directed to school safety and security measures. The council on elementary and secondary education shall promulgate rules and regulations for the administration and operation of this section.

(c) For purposes of addressing health and safety deficiencies as defined by the school building authority, including the remediation of hazardous materials, the school housing aid ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as the construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, and a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot.

In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to this purpose.

(d) For purposes of educational enhancement, including projects devoted to the enhancement of early childhood education and career and technical education, the school housing aid ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, and a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot.

In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to these purposes.

(e) For replacement of a facility that has a facilities condition index of sixty-five percent (65%) or higher, the school housing ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, does not receive a bonus pursuant to subsection (f) or subsection (g), and a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot. In order
to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to this purpose.

(f) For any new construction or renovation that increases the functional utilization of any facility from less than sixty percent (60%) to more than eighty percent (80%), including the consolidation of school buildings within or across districts, the school housing aid ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, and a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot. In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to this purpose.

(g) For any new construction or renovation that decreases the functional utilization of any facility from more than one hundred twenty percent (120%) to between eighty-five percent (85%) to one hundred five percent (105%), the school housing ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, and a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot. In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to this purpose.

(h) For consolidation of two (2) or more school buildings, within or across districts into one school building, the school housing aid ratio shall be increased by five percent (5%) so long as construction of the project commences by December 30, 2023, is completed by December 30, 2028, a two hundred fifty million dollar ($250,000,000) general obligation bond is approved on the November 2018 ballot, and does not receive a bonus pursuant to subsection (f) or subsection (g). In order to qualify for the increased share ratio, twenty-five percent (25%) of the project costs or a minimum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) must be specifically directed to this purpose.

(i) Any regionalized and/or non-regionalized school district receiving an increased share ratio for a project approved prior to July 1, 2018, shall continue to receive the increased share ratio for as long as the project receives state housing aid.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.
EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION -- STATEWIDE REFERENDUM

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This act would provide for a statewide voter referendum seeking approval of capital
development bonds for direct funding for foundational level school housing aid and the school
capital building authority fund in the amount of two hundred fifty million dollars ($250,000,000).
It will also extend some dates in the increased school housing ratio statute.

This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC003983/SUB A
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