

Rhode Island Supreme Court blocks increase in health insurance costs for unionized state workers.

The [AP](#) (8/26, Henry) reported that Rhode Island Superior Court Judge Patricia Hurst ruled Tuesday that "Gov. Don Carcieri (R) cannot unilaterally raise health insurance costs for unionized state workers as part of his effort to close a massive budget deficit." The governor's disputed plan "would have saved an estimated \$33.5 million," by mandating some state workers "to pay more for healthcare and forgo a pay raise this year." But Council 94 members rejected "the plan by a margin of nearly 15-to-1, [and Gov.] Carcieri signed an executive order implementing the healthcare terms" despite the Council's vote. The decision bars Gov. Carcieri from implementing "an executive order forcing about 4,000 members of Council 94, the state's largest employees union, to pay more for their health insurance." In response to the ruling, Gov. Carcieri will "seek an immediate stay from state Supreme Court," and said that "he could resort to layoffs, furloughs or other steps to balance the budget deficit," if the case is not ruled in his favor.