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ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND

**TESTIMONY ON 24-H 7230,
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW – GROCERY STORES
February 27, 2024**

The ACLU of Rhode Island has no position on this bill in general or its intent. However, if the bill is favorably considered, we urge an amendment to the “enforcement” section, which is designed to protect grocery store employees from retaliation for reporting violations of the self-checkout restrictions established by the legislation.

In that regard, the bill merely provides that an “employee alleging retaliation by their employer for making a complaint alleging violations of this chapter may bring a cause of action in Rhode Island superior court.” [Page 3, lines 2-3.] The bill provides no details about this cause of action or the remedies that are available to a victim of retaliation.

Rhode Island presently has a robust whistleblower protection law for employees, codified at R.I.G.L. §28-50-1. That law provides specific remedies that are available for violations, including reinstatement if the employee is fired, monetary damages, and attorneys’ fees. We urge that the enforcement section of this bill be amended to refer to the whistleblowers’ statute so that there is no confusion about that law’s applicability to victims of retaliation under this bill.

Thank you for considering our views.