



Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Tony D. Cardwell
President

Dale E. Bogart, Jr.
Secretary-Treasurer

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Joseph Solomon
Chairman, House Corporations Committee
82 Smith St
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Teamsters Rail Conference, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWED-IBT), and our Veteran members in Rhode Island, I write today to **oppose House Bill 5043.**

The BMWED-IBT is proud to offer and encourage private expert support to our Veteran members. Our members are armed with all the information available to them and appreciate the ability to make the best choice for them and their families. We have been working closely with Veterans Guardian to educate our members on the full range of options available free of charge and for a fee. We are proud to ensure that our Rhode Island Veteran members and brothers and sisters nationwide are well-informed and choose the best options for them.

As a Veteran myself and the Director of Government Affairs for the BMWED-IBT, I used Veterans Guardian to help me achieve an increase in my rating. Unfortunately, years of navigating the complicated Veterans Affairs process frustrated me. I tried the free services offered by Veteran Service Organizations, but while well-intentioned, they failed to meet my needs. Free doesn't always mean better, and I have the choice to decide who helps me with my claim.

Rhode Island HB 5043 might be well-intentioned, but this issue has nuances and complications that require far more understanding.

Rhode Island Veterans deserve a choice, and the BMWED members in Rhode Island deserve the option to use companies like Veterans Guardian.

This bill is trying to accomplish a noble effort. Unfortunately, it takes away important options for the hard-working, dedicated brothers and sisters of the BMWED-IBT. I strongly urge you to vote against Rhode Island HB 5043.

Sincerely,

Jeff Joines
Director of Government Affairs