



RHODE ISLAND WORKING FAMILIES POWER

Rep. Susan Donovan, Chair
House Health & Human Services

Tuesday March 26, 2024

Support for H7733, relating to a Workforce Standards Board

Chair Donovan and Members of the Committee,

RI Working Families Power writes in deep support for the Workforce Standards Board Bill—H7733, sponsored by Rep. Scott Slater. This bill represents a crucial step forward in our state’s ongoing effort to enhance the quality of nursing home care across our state, ensuring both our most vulnerable citizens and the dedicated workforce that supports them are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

H7733 proposes the establishment of a 13-member Workforce Standards Board composed of state department officials, representatives from nursing homes, frontline caregivers, and community organizations. This board is tasked with implementing and enforcing policies that will significantly improve staffing levels, wage conditions, training, and accountability within the for-profit nursing home sector. These types of Workforce Standards Boards for various sectors can be found in at least six states across the country, bringing together labor, management, researchers, and community stakeholders to ensure our society’s most important sectors are meeting the needs of our communities.

RI’s nursing homes, which accrue over \$100 million annually have seen a distressing decline in care quality, primarily due to persistent understaffing issues. By upholding high standards for working conditions and improving wages, this Workforce Standards Board can help attract essential care workers back into the sector, thereby enhancing the quality of care provided.

This Workforce Standards Board would facilitate a collaborative environment, uniting stakeholders together to meet shared goals. This proposal is a commitment to the well-being of our most vulnerable citizens and a recognition of the invaluable role played by our frontline caregivers, and we urge passage.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Zachary Mezera
RI Organizing Director
Working Families Power