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April 24, 2024

Hon. Robert Craven
Chairperson
House Committee on Judiciary
HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H-7054; An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations — Payment of Wages

Dear Chairman Craven:

BuildRI is a domestic non-profit trade association comprised of four (4) contractor associations (the Labor Relations Division of the RI Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, the New England Mechanical Contractors' Ass'n, the RI Mason Contractors' Ass'n, and the RI and Southeast MA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Ass'n), and seventeen (17) Local Trade Unions comprised of approximately 10,000 local tradesmen and women. On behalf of our organization, I write in **SUPPORT** of the above referred to legislation for the reasons that follow.

In years past, the Rhode Island General Assembly has passed legislation aimed at protecting workers from illicit practices. This legislation would allow for individuals employed by construction companies who have experienced wage theft, to recover the wages owed to them when their direct employer cannot (i.e. insolvent). This legislation would permit the employee to hold the prime contractor responsible for the payment of unpaid wages, particularly since the contractors ultimately benefited from this unpaid work.

The prime contractor on a job site, is responsible to ensure the work is done safely, and to make sure all workers are appropriately hired and managed by their subcontractors. Because the prime contractor hires subcontractors to perform the work, they should be held responsible for the payment of wages, if the subcontractor choose to leave without paying what their workers are rightfully owed.

This legislation holds unscrupulous prime contractors and subcontractors accountable, and establishes an avenue for employees to pursue civil action if necessary.

BuildRI, and our partners urge passage of H 7054, and thank Representative Morales for his work in sponsoring.

Sincerely,
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory A. Mancini".

Gregory A. Mancini
Executive Director/General Counsel