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**NORTHERN RHODE ISLAND  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Arthur Corvese  
Chairman, House Labor Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Corvese and Committee Members:

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket.

The Chamber is opposed to the passage of H.7171, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance.

The bill: Increases the weekly dependents allowance provided under both Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) from \$10 to \$20 or 7% of the benefit rate, whichever is greater

- Expands the TCI benefit to cover employees who wish to take time to care for a sibling (including half-siblings and foster siblings), a grandchild or a “care recipient.” A “care recipient” is defined as ***“a person for whom the employee is responsible for providing or arranging health or safety related care, including, but not limited to, helping the person obtain diagnostic, preventive, routine, or therapeutic health treatment.”***
- Increases the benefit provided to twelve (12) weeks in a benefit year beginning January 1, 2025. This benefit was first extended to employees in 2014 at four (4) weeks. The legislature increased it to five (5) weeks in 2022 and to six (6) weeks in 2023. The employer is required to hold the job for the employee that is on leave.



NORTHERN RHODE ISLAND  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Employers are having an extremely difficult time attracting employees. Finding temporary workers can be even more challenging. Should H.7171 pass, all employers will be looking for replacements for up to three months if an employee takes the full time permitted. Employers with fifty employees or more could be looking for replacements for up to six (6) months if the employee elects to take Parental and Medical Family Leave first and then opts to take TCI benefits. This is a very high burden at a time when businesses are least able to adapt.

The Chamber strongly encourages the committee to request a fiscal note for H.7171. Doubling the number of weeks an employee can draw from the fund could drain the fund to a point that much higher contributions will be necessitated. The 2024 TDI contribution rate was raised to 1.2% of an employee's wages with a maximum contribution of \$1044 (2023 maximum contribution was \$924). This rate increase may be a consequence of the expansion in benefits from five to six weeks in 2023. The committee should attain a full understanding of the financial implications associated with a doubling of the benefit to twelve weeks before this bill is addressed further.

Thank you for your consideration of the Chamber's concerns.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Catucci  
President/CEO  
Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce