



February 14, 2024

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

RE: H.7171, An Act Relating to Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance – General Provisions

Chairman Corvese and Committee Members:

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition oppose H.7171 - An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance. This bill increases the dependent allowance, provided under TDI and TCI, from \$10 per week per dependent to \$20 per week per dependent. H.7171 also expands the purpose of coverage to include the illness of a sibling, a grandchild and a “care recipient.” A “care recipient” is basically anyone that might rely on an employee to assist with various types of medical care.

The Coalition is concerned about two possible negative impacts: increased absenteeism of employees and potential costs to the TDI/TCI system. Expanding the eligibility requirements to care of siblings and care recipients means more opportunities for employees to leave work with financial benefits. Employers in Rhode Island, like many other states, are grappling with a shortage of available workers. The great resignation, coupled with the changing demographics in our state, has left many companies struggling to find help. While we empathize with individuals who are facing family challenges, we cannot forget that allowing those individuals to leave the workplace results in challenges for co-workers and business owners. The current Rhode Island law seeks to help families care for children, spouses, domestic partners, parents, in-laws and grandparents. H.7171 goes too far by adding anyone the employee wishes to call a care recipient. It will be very difficult to discern who is truly a care-giver and who is looking for a partially-paid vacation.

It is difficult to know the full scope of the financial impact that will come should this bill pass. If the result is a large impact, we trust that the legislature will not place a double burden on employers by changing the current funding mechanism for the TDI/TCI program to include an employer contribution.

For these reasons, we request that you take no further action on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Associated Builders and Contractors, Rhode Island
East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce
Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce
National Federation of Independent Business
North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce
Rhode Island Bankers Association
Rhode Island Beverage Association
Rhode Island Business Group on Health
Rhode Island Hospitality Association
Rhode Island Manufacturers Association
Rhode Island Marine Trades Association
Rhode Island Mortgage Bankers Association
Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care
Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Committee
Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants
Rhode Island Staffing Association
Sustainable Benefits Strategies, LLC

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.