



March 5, 2024

Honorable Arthur Corvese  
Chairperson, House Committee on Labor  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H.7319, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act

Dear Chairman Corvese and Committee Members,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition strongly oppose the passage of H.7319, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act.

H.7319 tells a majority of Rhode Island businesses, “You must give your employees eight hours of paid vacation time every week or increase wages.” This paid vacation time comes in addition to eleven paid holidays, for a total of 63 paid vacation days each year. Should an employee take family leave and temporary caregiver leave as well, an employer could be looking for a “temporary employee” replacement for up to ninety-five days (125 days if the General Assembly doubles the temporary caregiver benefit as proposed by other bills this year). This calculation does not include vacation time many employers provide employees today. Should H.7319 pass, it is extremely possible employers will be forced to eliminate vacation benefits.

H.7319 provides an exemption for employers with less than five hundred employees. However, it is unclear how effective the exemption will be, as the legislation goes on to change the definition of “full time equivalent” employee in various state statutes. The bill is clear that any employer continuing to operate under a forty-hour work week, must pay overtime after thirty-two hours, thus greatly increasing labor costs and discouraging employment.

For these reasons, the Coalition members urge this committee to reject the passage of H.7319.

Sincerely,

American Council of Engineering Companies of RI

Associated Builders and Contractors, Rhode Island

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Energy Marketers Association Rhode Island

National Federation of Independent Business

North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island Bankers Association

Rhode Island Beverage Association

Rhode Island Builders Association

Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers 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.