



February 12, 2025

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

Re: H.5132, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Workplace Psychological Safety Act

Dear Chairman Corvese,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition would like to express our opposition to House bill 5132 – An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Workplace Psychological Safety Act.

We agree that employees should be treated with respect in the workplace and that co-workers should treat each other professionally. The difficult challenge for any business is addressing the many different definitions of “psychological abuse.” H.5132, while well-meaning, would result in creating a workplace that will have great difficulty functioning in the real world.

H.5132 requires all employers to adopt policies within 180 days of enactment. The policies must include measures to prevent and detect psychological abuse, training programs for managers, supervisors, and board members, posting documents outlining employee’s rights, creating anti-retaliation programs, establishing discipline processes and an investigation policy for complaints.

The policies which must be adopted under H.5132 obligate the employer to prevent “psychological abuse” in the workplace. “Psychological abuse” is defined as “mentally provocative harassment. Mistreatment that has the effect of hurting, weakening, confusing or frightening a person mentally or emotionally.” This definition is extremely subjective. Even with the attempt to use a “reasonable person” measurement, the courts will be left with attempting to decipher what it means for an individual to be confused or weakened as a result of another person’s words or actions.

An employee that successfully claims a violation is entitled to economic, compensatory and even punitive damages or up to \$5,000, whichever is greater. Reports of violations are available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act; however, redacting all private information of the aggrieved employee,

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

including the employee's name. This seems to be another punitive measure meant to inflict harm on the employer.

This bill will lead to countless numbers of complaints, penalties and unhappy workplaces, while employers scramble to complete all the investigations that will undoubtedly come to fruition. For those reasons, the members of the Coalition strongly oppose the passage of H.5132 and urge this committee to take no action.

Sincerely,

American Council of Engineering Companies of Rhode Island

Associated Builders and Contractors of 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 Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association

Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Rhode Island Mortgage Bankers Association

Rhode Island Staffing Association

Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Labor Committee members