



## Director's Office

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Jonathan Womer, Director

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese  
Chairperson  
House Committee on Labor  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: House Bill No. 5506 – An Act Relating to Courts and Civil Procedure – Procedure Generally**

Dear Chairperson Corvese,

Thank you for providing the Department of Administration (“Department”) with the opportunity to submit comments in response to House Bill No. 5506, which addresses free speech in the workplace.

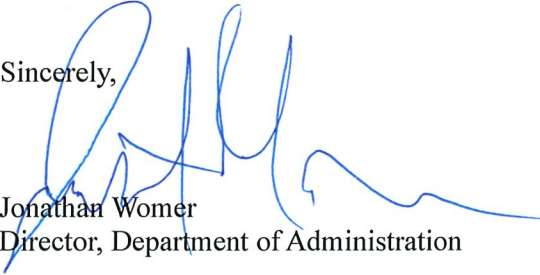
Following the hearing on Senate Bill 126, the Department had a positive discussion with the RI AFL-CIO regarding our amendment request for this legislation. We are pleased to work with them on this issue, are supportive of the substitute A language submitted for Senate Bill 126, and are simply submitting this letter for the record.

While this year’s proposal provides additional clarity compared to a similar bill filed last session, the Department still has concerns regarding vague language in the legislation and unintended consequence that may result. While the bill does not prohibit an employer from communicating information necessary for job performance, the bill does not specify who makes that determination or how it’s made. Additionally, the exemption for casual conversations between employees and an agent, representative, or designee of an employer does not provide a definition of a casual conversation, leaving the matter open to differing interpretations.

Further, the Department suggests clarifying the definition of “political matters” to state:

*(1) “Political matters” means topics that are unrelated to the employer’s business or business activities, such as subjects relating to elections for political office, political parties, proposals to change legislation or regulations which are not directly related to the employer’s business, and a decision whether to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or labor organization*

Sincerely,



Jonathan Womer  
Director, Department of Administration

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor  
The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
James DeCastro, Committee Clerk