



March 24, 2026

The Honorable John P. Burke
Chair, Senate Labor and Gaming Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: S 2171

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of public service professionals represented by the National Education Association Rhode Island, I write in strong support of this legislation addressing access to desk audits for state employees.

This legislation represents a necessary modernization of an outdated policy that no longer reflects the realities of today's public workforce. Currently, the Department of Administration requires employees to supervise at least two full-time staff members to qualify for a desk audit. Established in 1981, this threshold fails to account for the significant changes in job responsibilities driven by advancements in technology, increased regulatory compliance, staffing, and the growing complexity of service delivery.

Across state agencies and public higher education institutions, including the Rhode Island Department of Health, CCRI, and URI employees are performing increasingly technical, specialized work. Many roles now require advanced degrees, certifications, and highly developed skill sets that were never contemplated in original job descriptions. Despite these expanded responsibilities, employees remain ineligible for a desk audit not because their work lacks value, but because they do not meet a narrow and outdated supervisory definition.

It is crucial to recognize that many of these employees do in fact supervise others. They manage part-time staff, student workers, interns, and contracted personnel, often with significant responsibility for training, scheduling, and performance oversight. However, under the current rules, this supervision is not recognized unless it involves at least two full-time state employees, effectively excluding a substantial portion of the workforce from even being considered for reclassification.

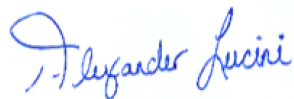
For example, a professional support staff member at CCRI would routinely supervise between eight and fifteen part-time student workers along with managing critical operational responsibilities. This member was denied a classification review solely due to the absence of full-time direct reports. That individual ultimately left their position, resulting in a loss of valuable institutional knowledge and continuity.

This legislation does not guarantee reclassification or diminish existing standards. Rather, it ensures that employees have the opportunity to be evaluated based on the actual duties and responsibilities they perform. It restores fairness to a system that should recognize the full scope of an employee's contributions, not limit consideration based on an arbitrary and outdated threshold.

At its core, this bill is about equity, retention, and respect for public service. It provides dedicated state employees with a fair opportunity to have their work accurately assessed and appropriately compensated. By doing so, it strengthens the state workforce and improves the ability of agencies to deliver high-quality services to the people of Rhode Island.

We respectfully urge you to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Alexander Lucini
Government Relations Director, NEARI