



March 17, 2021

Chair Anastasia Williams
House Committee on Labor
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H5853 on NDAs

Dear Chair Williams:

The Rhode Island Chapter of the National Organization for Women (RI NOW) supports H5853, which would prohibit an employer to require an employee to sign a nondisclosure or non-disparagement agreement as a condition of employment

This change is needed to help put an end to workplace discrimination, and ensure that Rhode Islanders have equal protection against harassment on the job. By expanding the protections offered to employees, the state legislature has a unique opportunity to make Rhode Island a better place to work.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, at least 25 percent of women will experience sexual harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, 75 percent of harassment victims experienced retaliation when they reported. Between 87 and 94 percent of employees experiencing harassment in the workplace do not file a complaint. Passing H5853 into Rhode Island law is a major step to combatting workplace harassment, and help reduce these statistics in our state.

We are asking the Committee to pass this bill so that all Rhode Island workers are able to work free of harassment. Moreover, employees can and should be able to speak up against harassment in the workplace, and employers should not be able to coerce victims of workplace harassment into silence. Perpetrators of these crimes in the workplace, along with their employers, should be held accountable for their actions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Hilary Levey Friedman, PhD
RI Chapter, National Organization for Women

Rhode Island National Organization for Women (RI NOW) is a membership-based advocacy organization with hundreds of members and supporters throughout the state of Rhode Island. We believe that anyone who identifies as a woman deserves equality and equity in political, social, and economic arenas.