



Honorable Anastasia Williams
Chairperson, House Committee on Labor
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

March 17, 2021

RE: Testimony on H.5718 and 5853 and Forbids an employer to require an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement; or non-disparagement agreement regarding alleged violations of civil rights or criminal conduct as a condition of employment.

Chairperson Williams,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition oppose HBs 5718 and 5853 -forbids an employer to require an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement; or non-disparagement agreement regarding alleged violations of civil rights or criminal conduct as a condition of employment.

These bills forbid an employer to require an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement or non-disparagement agreement regarding alleged violations of civil rights or criminal conduct as a condition of employment.

The Business Coalition takes the issue of workplace harassment extremely seriously. No one should feel unsafe or harassed at work. However, we are concerned that a total ban on nondisclosures and disparagement agreements will actually cause greater harm to those that have experienced harassment. If companies are not allowed to keep allegations confidential and prevent possible litigation, they would have little incentive to settle claims early and victims would be forced to litigate. Litigation not only takes not several years, it also forces the victim to publicly relive their harassment in a public setting.

In light of these concerns, the Rhode Island Business Coalition respectfully urges the Committee to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit – Grafton Willey, Tax and Budget Committee Chairman

Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants – Melissa Travis, President

Rhode Island Hospitality Association – Dale J. Venturini, President/CEO

Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association – Kirk Ives, Regional Director

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association – David M. Chenevert, Executive Director

Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® – Philip Tedesco, CEO

Rhode Island Staffing, William Roth, Executive Director

Ivy Wealth Management, Ralph Capollo