



Rhode Island **SEIU** State Council

Rhode Island SEIU State Council
280 Broadway, Suite 201
Providence, RI 02903

February 24, 2021

House Committee on Labor

State House

Providence, RI 02903

Bill- H5130

Dear House Committee on Labor:

My name is Nicole O'Loughlin and I am the RI SEIU State Council Director, which encompasses four locals in Rhode Island, they are Local 1199NE, 32BJ, Local 580 and Local 401. We represent a collection of healthcare, DCYF, Janitorial, Security, DLT, workforce development workers, etc.

SEIU RI State Council is pleased to support Representative Bennett's Bill HB5130, which will increase the minimum wage starting on October 1, 2021, from the present amount of \$10.50 each year until October 1st, 2024 where it will reach \$15 per hour.

As a union primarily made up of healthcare workers who in most cases do not make \$15/hr, it is a constant struggle for the workers to be able to make ends meet without working multiple jobs. In RI we have another issue of maintaining a consistent workforce, turnover rates are high in jobs that need to have stability for the consumers and workers. We as a state cannot compete with our neighbors who pay more for the same work.

As of today, the minimum wage comparison between Massachusetts at \$13.50/hr and RI at \$11.50/hr, two dollars more an hour than Rhode Island and with a clear pathway to \$15 minimum wage. A person making minimum wage in MA will earn \$80 more in a 40-hour week than those in RI. In a state where we are constantly comparing and trying to keep up with Massachusetts when it comes to education, tax policies etc., why are we still so far behind on this issue.