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The Honorable Anastasia Williams  
House Labor Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Williams and Committee Members,

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket. The Chamber opposes the passage of H.5403, An Act Relating to Holidays and Days of Special Observance – Work on Holidays and Sundays. H.5403 bars the Director of Labor and Training from providing an exemption to Rhode Island's premium pay requirement unless the employer:

1. Pays its employees twice the minimum wage (currently \$11.50 an hour)
2. Does not use temporary employment agencies to help staff its business
3. Provides health insurance to its employees
4. Provides retirement options to its employees and
5. Has no violations of labor or environmental laws, nor any settlement agreements concerning alleged violations

Premium pay is time and a half wages paid to an employee working on Sunday or a holiday as part of the employee's forty (40) hour work week. If an employee works Thursday through Monday, eight hours a day, and has off Tuesday and Wednesday, that employee gets time and a half wages (1.5) for the eight hours worked on Sunday. This concept developed out of the old blue laws (first created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) that every state in the country, other than Massachusetts and Rhode Island, has eliminated. Massachusetts is in the process of phasing out its premium pay requirements as a compromise made with the business community when it passed legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$15. Our neighboring state currently has a premium pay of 1.2 times the wage paid. The rate will go to 1.1 times the wage paid starting January 1, 2022; and premium pay will be eliminated January 1, 2023. Rhode Island will be the only state that requires this of its business community.

The Chamber strongly requests that Rhode Island join the rest of the country and phase out the requirement in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lenette Forry-Menard