

March 1, 2021

To: House Committee on Labor
(HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov)

From: Todd E. Brayton – Bryant Associates, Inc.

REFERENCE: Opposition to House Bill 5717

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Bryant Associates, a minority and disadvantaged business enterprise (MBE/DBE) certified by the State of Rhode Island, we respectfully oppose H. 5717. Women owned businesses and engineering firms have faced roadblocks and barriers, which the current minority set asides have been enacted to address. Removing women from the definition of minority business enterprise would have serious and adverse consequences for these businesses. The roadblocks and barriers for these women owned businesses still exist today and it remains an uphill climb for most of these businesses, even with the minority set asides. With the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this legislation would cause great hardship to Rhode Island women owned businesses already struggling and would make this economic reality even worse.

In addition, we also oppose the restriction to the definition of a minority that it is a person who is a citizen or lawful resident of the state instead of the United States. Many small MBE/DBE firms, such as ours, are owned by minorities that live in adjacent Massachusetts, but have an office in Rhode Island that employs Rhode Islanders, including minorities. This restriction would cause great hardship to our firm and others and would reduce the availability of firms to meet the MBE/DBE requirements, making it much more difficult to reach the minority set asides.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns, and respectfully implore you not to move forward with H. 5717 or any legislation that would remove women from the definition of a minority business enterprise or make in-state residency a requirement for purposes of the current minority set asides. This legislation would jeopardize many small MBE/DBE Rhode Island businesses with no benefit to the State of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

BRYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.


Todd E. Brayton, PE
Director of Operations – Rhode Island
Transportation Director

TEB:

