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Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business
House Bill No. 5250
Relating to Business and Professions – Holiday Business
Before the House Committee on Corporations
May 7, 2025

Chairman Solomon and Members of the House Committee on Corporations:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). A non-profit, non-partisan organization, NFIB is the nation's and Rhode Island's largest small business advocacy group. In Rhode Island, NFIB represents hundreds of small and independent business owners involved in all types of industry, including manufacturing, retail, wholesale, service, and agriculture. The average NFIB member has five employees and annual gross revenues of about \$450,000. In short, NFIB represents the small Main Street business owners from across the state. On behalf of those small and independent business employers in Rhode Island, I want to share our concerns with House Bill No. 5250.

Rhode Island should be working to phase out ALL Sunday and holiday pay as it is currently the only state left in the nation demanding this of businesses. When Massachusetts raised their minimum wage to \$15 per hour in 2023, they fully phased out this remnant blue law because it would be cost prohibitive for businesses to remain open on those days. Rhode Island businesses are currently forced to pay this \$22.50 premium pay. Making matters worse, there are bills this session for a \$20 or \$22 minimum wage, meaning a business would be required to pay \$30.00 or \$31.00 per hour on Sundays and holidays.

This outdated premium law leads to many small employers not opening on Sundays, while their big box competitors remain operating. When a consumer discovers a Main Street business' doors are closed on Sundays, and opts to instead frequent a large chain store, it becomes increasingly difficult for that small business to regain that customer. It leads to fewer hours being available for workers as small businesses opt to keep their doors closed on those days or reduce staffing.

This Committee should support House Bill Nos. 5943 and 5944 phasing out this remnant blue law for businesses with less than 15 workers. Those bills are a step in the right direction bringing Rhode Island in line with forty-nine other states. I strongly urge this Committee to instead support House Bill Nos. 5943 and 5944 to help small businesses in Rhode Island. Thank you.