



## Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Tony D. Cardwell  
*President*

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March 25, 2025

The Honorable Joseph Solomon, Chair  
House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith St  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Teamsters Rail Conference, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes (BMWED-IBT), and our Veteran members in Rhode Island, I write today to **SUPPORT Rhode Island House Bill 5419.**

The BMWED-IBT is proud to offer and encourage private expert support to our Veteran members. Our members are armed with all the information available to them and appreciate the ability to make the best choice for them and their families. We have been working closely with Veterans Guardian to educate our members on the full range of options available free of charge and for a fee. We are proud to ensure that our Arizona Veteran members and brothers and sisters nationwide are well-informed and choose the best options for them.

As a Veteran myself and the Director of Government Affairs for the BMWED-IBT, I used Veterans Guardian to help me achieve an increase in my rating. Unfortunately, years of navigating the complicated Veterans Affairs process frustrated me. I tried the free services offered by Veteran Service Organizations, but while well-intentioned, they failed to meet my needs. Free doesn't always mean better, and I have the choice to decide who helps me with my claim.

Rhode Island HB 5419 is a commonsense consumer protection bill to ensure our member Veterans are not taken advantage of by bad actors and nefarious practices.

Rhode Island Veterans deserve a choice, and the BMWED members in Rhode Island deserve the option to use companies like Veterans Guardian – while being safeguarded from true claim sharks.

This bill is trying to accomplish a noble effort and preserves the options for the hard-working, dedicated brothers and sisters of the BMWED-IBT. I strongly urge you to vote in support of Rhode Island HB 5419.

Sincerely,

Jeff Joines  
Director of Government Affairs