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## Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business  
In Support of House Bill No. 7545  
Relating to Health and Safety – Single Use Plastic Straws  
Before the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
April 11, 2022

Chairman Bennett and Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island State 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 urge you to support House Bill No. 7545 providing exemptions for the plastic straw ban.

This is a commonsense proposal that helps address the concerns of take-out and drive-through businesses regarding the new plastic straw rules. Most retail establishments had already voluntarily cut back on single-use straws and allowed the customer to request one to suit their needs. However, some businesses still required the use of straws for their products and should not need a customer request to offer one. Customer satisfaction is important for small businesses that depend upon repeat customers for survival. If a patron drives away from a take-out restaurant or drive-through not realizing they are missing their straw, it could result in a negative experience for the consumer. That customer will not blame the current prohibition plastic straws, that customer will blame the business.

It would be unreasonable to assume patrons of local cafés and coffeeshops would not expect straws for an iced coffee or smoothie. For customers ordering milk shakes at an ice cream shoppe, there would be no question they would require a straw for such a thick dessert beverage. That is why this bill makes sense for both consumers and businesses.

NFIB supports this legislation to provide flexibility for small businesses regarding the new plastic straw law. We urge you to support House Bill No. 7545, thank you.