



**RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS** AFT
AFL - CIO

To: House Finance Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative
Date: April 8, 2026
Re: Organ Donation Leave for State Employees
Testimony in Support of H 7159 (Edwards, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of **H 7159**, legislation that addresses financial and workplace barriers to organ donation by providing paid leave for state employees during donation and recovery.

Too many public employees face an impossible choice when considering organ donation: protect their income or save a life. Without dedicated paid leave, workers may be forced to exhaust sick time, take unpaid leave, or delay medically necessary procedures. This disproportionately impacts lower-wage and hourly public employees, creating inequitable access to the ability to donate.

H 7159 establishes a clear, structured paid leave policy that allows eligible state employees to recover from organ donation without financial penalty. The bill provides defined leave durations based on medical need, ensures continued accrual of benefits, and integrates with existing federal leave protections. By using administrative leave rather than requiring employees to draw down accrued time, the policy preserves earned benefits while supporting public health.

From a fiscal perspective, the impact of this policy is limited and predictable, while the benefits are substantial. Supporting organ donation can reduce long-term healthcare costs associated with chronic illness and demonstrates Rhode Island's commitment to a stable, humane public workforce. Investing in workers in this way strengthens retention and reduces turnover costs across state agencies.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support H 7159.

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