



Marc Bialek, President
Associated Builders and Contractors, Rhode Island Chapter

Testimony Opposing of H 7106

January 30, 2024

Dear House Labor Committee:

As proposed, H7106 would strike at an employer's freedom to discuss issues with employees that may affect their well-being and the success of the company that employs them.

The bill's definition of "political matters" is overly broad and includes "matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, proposals to change legislation, proposals to change regulation and the decision to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or labor organization". This definition could effectively prevent employers from speaking with their employees about pending legislation or regulations that could seriously impact the business and, by extension, the employees' jobs.

In the construction industry there are many laws and regulations that affect employee health and wellness that are often communicated during mandatory meetings. This could be interpreted to include important OSHA regulations or safety guidance and information from state agencies like the Department of Labor, Department of Administrative Services or the Department of Health. We fear this bill could strike at an employer's ability to effectively communicate these important topics to employees.

Finally, according to Connecticut's former Attorney General George Jepsen, this bill is likely preempted by federal law as the state cannot govern areas of law covered by the National Labor Relations Board. This fact alone should lead this body to reject this proposal and avoid the ensuing legal challenge that it will receive.

We urge you to reject H 7106.

I thank you for your time and consideration and I am happy to answer any questions. For follow up I can be reached at 401-474-3740 or marc@abc-ri.org.