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February 1, 2024

The Honorable Arthur Corvese  
Chairman, House Labor Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Chairman Corvese and Committee Members:

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket. We write to respectfully oppose the passage of H.7106, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Labor Relations Act

H.7106 is modeled after legislation that was passed by the Connecticut legislature and is now being challenged in the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. It limits the First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendments rights of employers by barring them from holding mandatory meetings with employees to discuss any issue covered under the bill's definition of "political matters." "Political matters" is very broadly defined as, "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."

If enacted, H.7106 would punitively limit an employer's ability to educate employees about legislation, regulations or organizing efforts that could significantly affect the business' operations or the employee's work responsibilities. It is this very situation that was anticipated, and addressed by Congress under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. That federal law specifically allows employers to hold such meetings provided they do not threaten employees in the meeting:

***"c) Expression of views without threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit.*** *The expressing of any views, argument, or opinion, or the dissemination thereof, whether in written, printed, graphic, or visual form, shall not constitute or be evidence of an unfair labor practice under any of the provisions of this subchapter, if such expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit."*



Businesses cannot grow and thrive without effective and informative communication lines between employers and employees. H.7106 undermines that relationship and creates an unwelcoming environment in which to open and operate a business.

For these reasons, The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce asks the committee to take no action on H.7106.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Catucci', is written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Catucci  
President/CEO  
Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce