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## Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business  
In Opposition to House Bill No. 7793  
Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Rhode Island Parental and Family Leave Act  
Before the House Committee on Labor  
April 10, 2024

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

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. 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 oppose House Bill No. 7793, expanding parental leave.

According to [NFIB's February 2024 Small Business Optimism Index](#) 37% of businesses still have positions they cannot fill. Despite efforts to hire, including raising compensation, owners struggle to staff their businesses and find qualified employees. In January, of the business owners surveyed, 56% of owners report attempting to hire and 91% of them discovered too few or unqualified applicants. In short, now is not the time to expand time-off policies in Rhode Island.

Anecdotally, most people have experienced waiting longer in a checkout line, an extended time before your meal is served at a restaurant, or maybe a delay in an order arriving because of these labor shortages. Nearly doubling the amount of time off for parental leave to twenty-four weeks will only exacerbate the existing problem. This will not only impact employers trying to run their operations, but it also means the remaining employees will have added workloads to cover for coworkers utilizing an additional eleven weeks of leave. While this leave is unpaid, extending time-off benefits will only add to the state's labor shortage, causing added strain for both employers and employees.

I strongly urge you to reject House Bill No. 7793 almost doubling the amount of time a worker may use for parental leave. Thank you.