

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS



LOCAL 99

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Hon. Arthur Corvese
Chairman
House Committee on Labor
State House
Providence, RI 02903
HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

Re: H-5505 – An Act Relating to Public Property and Works – Labor and Payment of Debts by Contractors

Dear Chairman Corvese,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent now over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our partnership of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also serve as one, if not the only, voice of the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I wish to express our **strong support for H-5505** being heard this evening.

On all public works projects over \$1,000 contractors are required to pay their trade workers an established prevailing wage rate pursuant to R.I. Gen. Law § 37-13-1 *et seq.* The rate, established by the state Department of Labor and Training, is the combination of a base hourly wage rate plus a fringe benefit amount. The benefit includes an established amount for healthcare, retirement and workplace safety benefits. However, the law does not require contractors provide the actual benefit, only a purported cash equivalent, and in many instances that is exactly what they do. Contractors pay the purported cash equivalent as additional wages as opposed to providing the actual retirement benefits to their workers. This is not only contrary to the legislative intent of our prevailing wage laws, but it is also a competitive advantage for these contractors not to provide the actual benefit.

This legislation will:



Provide an avenue for working Rhode Islanders to be able to retire in dignity.



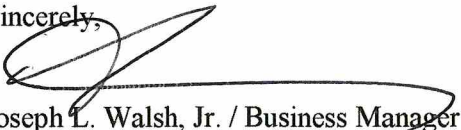
Level the playing field for contractors, ensuring they are paying workers similar hourly and fringe benefits.



Hold unscrupulous contractors responsible for not paying their workers the appropriate, and predetermined, wages and fringe benefits.

For the above reason's IBEW Local Union 99 is in full support of HB 5505, and we urge the Rhode Island House of Representatives to pass this important piece of legislation. Thank you, Chairman Corvese, for your leadership in supporting this legislation. Please do not hesitate to follow up with any additional questions you, or the committee, has on this legislation.

Sincerely,


Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager

cc: Committee Members
BuildRI