

LOCAL 51

PLUMBERS • PIPEFITTERS • REFRIGERATION

March 5, 2025

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,

On 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 paying 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 Plumber & Pipefitters, Local 51 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,

Paul Alvarez
Business Manager