

Good Afternoon,

My name is Danielle Small, and I am a proud citizen of Providence, RI. I am writing to you today in support of H5940.

One of the things I love most about Rhode Island is that it has maintained its sense of community even with a growing population. I attribute this strongly to the dedication and hard work of the employees of small businesses across Rhode Island. I feel worker-owned cooperatives have prioritized actually *listening* to the needs of our citizens. They display and offer free access to local artwork and artists. They facilitate the resurgence of 'Third Spaces', a place that offers people to engage in learning, book clubs, hobbies like knitting, networking and relationship building events that feel accessible to everyday Rhode Islanders - this is something that is invaluable.

As a social worker, the local worker owned cooperatives have not only been a place for me to engage further with my community but also serve as a wonderful resource for folks seeking sense of belonging, connection, and joy.

I believe that passing this act supports all owners within a small business to make informed decisions about their livelihood and will reinforce the ways they have shown up for Rhode Islanders above. This is an opportunity to establish that Rhode Island continues to uphold and prioritize the practice of Democracy through supporting businesses that practice it already, or desire to shift into a model that aligns with democratic values; such as listening to one another and prioritizing the needs of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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