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Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business
In Opposition to House Bill No. 6065
An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Bone Marrow and Organ Donor Leave Act
Before the House Committee on Labor
March 19, 2025

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island 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. The average NFIB member has five employees and annual gross revenues of about \$450,000. 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. 6065 in its current form, creating a new paid leave benefit according to the bill's explanation.

While well intentioned, NFIB has several concerns with this piece of legislation. First, the bill creates an entirely new leave benefit that allows paid time off for up to 30 days under certain medical circumstances. Though narrowly focused on organ and bone marrow donation, this bill will be an entirely new time-off mandate for Rhode Island businesses with 50 or more workers. Could this be expanded to a broader leave law? Will the employee threshold eventually be lowered from 50 to include smaller businesses as well?

Additionally, the leave outlined in House Bill No. 6065 is job protected, meaning an employer must keep the position open. While an employee utilizes the leave, their employer must also continue to pay health and other benefits.

Perhaps most concerning is the retaliation provision exposing employers to lawsuits. This new private right of action will result in an increase in frivolous lawsuits for employers. Any action taken against a worker that utilized this leave could be misconstrued as retaliation and will open business owners to lawsuits. For smaller business owners, the cost of a lawsuit ranks second only to the cost of health insurance as a non-governmental impediment to business growth and opportunity. And, even if the business owner prevails in the lawsuit, he or she loses due to the cost of attorneys' fees, the impact on

insurance premiums, and time spent away from the business to mount an effective defense. The threat of excessive costs of defending a lawsuit often forces small business owners to pay a settlement.

I strongly urge this committee to oppose House Bill No. 6065 in its current form. Thank you.