



April 2, 2025

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Chairman, Committee on Labor and Gaming
Room 135, Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5506

Dear Chairman Corvese,

I am writing to express my support for H 5506, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Employees’ Free Speech In Workplace. All employees are entitled to freedom of speech in the workplace, as protected by the first amendment. This bill is a critical step in safeguarding employees who exercise free speech rights regarding political and religious matters in the workplace.

H 5506 would update Section 28-6.15-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-6 entitled “Fair Employment Practices” to protect employees from penalty for refusing to attend meetings or consume communications that primarily serve to assert opinions regarding political and religious matters by establishing civil action that allows courts to award relief to violated employees. Employees should feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of being reprimanded for their views. By allowing employees to exercise their free speech rights, employers can ensure that all team members are treated fairly and respectfully.

Instituting a civil action that may award appropriate damages and legal fees for violated employees would help alleviate any unjust action imposed by employers. Wrongful disciplinary action in the workplace may lead to financial instability, emotional distress, and poor employee morale. It is important that employees uphold access to appropriate benefits and employment, and that compensatory measures may be taken when wrongful disciplinary action is imposed. I hope you will join me in supporting H 5506.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabina Matos".

Sabina Matos
Lieutenant Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor and Gaming
The Honorable Representatives Robert Craven, Sr., William O’Brien, Evan Shanley, Matthew Dawson, Alex Finkelman, and Brandon Potter