

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Arthur Corvese
Chair, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support of H 5942


Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Labor Committee,


Please accept this written testimony in support of House Bill 5942 which would add an additional fee of \$50.00 per year to food service establishments to be used to provide hospitality industry workforce training grants including, but not limited to, certified food and alcohol safety training programs.


According to 216-RICR-50-10-2, the rules and regulations for certification of food safety managers are established for the purpose of protecting Rhode Island consumers from foodborne illness. Food service establishments where time temperature control for safe food is prepared are required to employ at least one full-time, on-site manager who is at least eighteen years of age and is certified in food safety. This requirement increases to two certified managers if the establishment employs more than ten full-time kitchen employees.

To earn this certification, employees must be trained by an approved certification training institution/agency, and the instructor must meet specific qualifications including a minimum of two years' experience teaching or consulting on food related issues, employment in the food industry, or employment with a food regulatory agency. Additionally, instructors must be currently certified in food safety through a nationally accredited food safety program, have earned a final score of 90% or higher on the national examination, and complete hours of certification training every three years.

Similar to the food safety training regulations, any employee that serves alcohol (servers/bartenders), valet staff, and supervisors or managers of these job categories, are required to be trained in responsible alcohol service from a certified program approved by the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation. This training is required to cover the physiological effects of alcohol, it's association with social problems, legal requirements and liability, de-escalation, and techniques for checking identification and refusing service.

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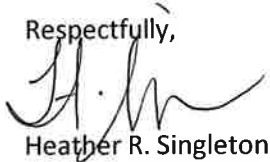
For the food service and hospitality industry, these two programs are paramount to workforce training and are held to the highest standards due to the nature of serving food and alcoholic beverages to the public.

The Rhode Island Hospitality Association has employed two full-time, certified instructors who in 2024 alone trained a total of 1,624 individuals in not only food safety and responsible alcohol service, but also customer service, sales, communication, apprenticeship development, and manager coaching. We were able to reach this accomplishment with grant funding from the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training as a Real Jobs RI Partner and were preparing to begin delivery of these programs in Spanish when we learned about statewide cuts to the Real Jobs RI Partnerships. For us, this represents a 70% cut to our training budget and requires us to significantly reduce the number of employees we are able to train, increase our registration fees to cover the cost of textbooks and instruction, and pause on hiring and training a bilingual certified instructor.

Although House Bill 5942 would increase a fee to the food service business sector, we are in support of this legislation because the designated usage of this revenue would be used to train the workforce for the industry it represents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Heather R. Singleton
Chief Operating Officer



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