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**House Labor Committee Testimony in Favor of H7217 to Amend the
Office of Personnel Administration's Classification Guide for Desk Audits**

My name is Aaron Frechette. I am a resident of Warwick and a Senior Public Health Promotion Specialist (Grade 331A) at the Rhode Island Department of Health. I first joined RIDOH's communications staff in February of 2017 after a long career in journalism. My functional title is Infectious Disease Communications Manager. I am assigned to coordinate communications for RIDOH's Division of Infectious Disease and Emergency Response related to infectious disease prevention and awareness. My duties include public health outbreak response; preparing and disseminating information via websites, social media, and printed materials; managing educational campaigns; education and outreach at community events; and preparing and disseminating healthcare professional advisories related to diseases like respiratory viruses, measles, Lyme Disease, HIV, sexually transmitted infections, hepatitis, and tuberculosis.

The State's job classifications are extremely outdated and often do not precisely match our Department's functional roles. I understand they were last updated in the 1990s. Although I have been working above my pay grade for many years performing the duties of a Principal Public Health Promotion Specialist, I have not submitted a desk audit request due to the requirement that you must supervise at least two full-time equivalent (FTE) State employees in order to be eligible. I had previously supervised 1 FTE and 1 contractor. I currently only supervise 1 contractor. Although the requirements and needs of supervising a contractor and an FTE are basically the same, only supervision of FTEs "count" under the current desk audit process.

While I believe my current duties have me working above my pay grade by performing the duties of a Principal Public Health Promotion Specialist, I am essentially "stuck" in my Senior Public Health Promotion Specialist classification, which is two pay grades below the Principal Public Health Promotion Specialist classification. Due to this disparity, which can be eliminated with this common sense legislation, I am being paid less than I should be earning. I urge you to vote in favor of H-7217 to rectify this disparity so dedicated public servants can be better able to manage our skyrocketing utility bills and costs of living we struggle to keep up with.