

Testimony in opposition to H7362: Health and safe families workplace act - workweek

Barbara Walsh, 62 Frederick Street, Warwick, RI 02888

Date of Hearing: February 5, 2026

To: Chair Corvese and the Honorable Members of the House Labor Committee

I am opposed to H7362. I find this bill to be confusing, so I question some tenants of the bill.

- The state and many municipalities employ more than 500 individuals, so as written I understand this would apply to the state, municipalities, colleges, and other quasi-governmental agencies (i.e. the airport).
- As I understand this bill, it would apply to hospitals, private retail entities, and other private employees.
- Are 35 hours per week employees affected?

These changes would require an inordinate fiscal burden for the above entities. Though it would be nice to work fewer hours while not losing pay it seems the timing is unreasonable given current financial hardships for the above organizations. Reductions in federal funding will result in some of those costs being passed on to the state. So this does not seem to be an appropriate time to add 20% to the budgets of those entities required to pay for 100% of a current 40 hour workweek while receiving 80% of work performed. The 20% difference in work performed would need to be made up in new hires or overtime. How is this reasonable to taxpayers or to consumers? Also, changing firefighter work schedules to be 32 hours per week when some shifts are currently 24 hours per day does not seem to be reasonable.

Such major changes should be the result of contract negotiations or corporate revisions to work standards.

H7367 indicates a Study Commission would propose an analysis of the tenants in this bill. Wouldn't a Study Commission which could assess the pros and cons of this bill be a better approach before this bill is considered.