



February 5, 2026

Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Chairman, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7362 - RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- HEALTHY AND SAFE FAMILIES WORKPLACES ACT--WORKWEEK

Dear Chairman Corvese and Honorable Members of the Committee:

As the Executive Director of Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance (the “Alliance”), I am grateful for the opportunity to provide the House Labor Committee with this written testimony in response to H7362- RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS – HEALTHY AND SAFE FAMILIES WORKPLACES ACT--WORKWEEK, which (1) mandates a standard workweek of 32 hours, (2) requires that employees receive the same pay for a 32-hour workweek as they would for a 40-hour workweek, and (3) requires overtime pay for work in excess of 32 hours in a workweek.

The Alliance opposes this well-intentioned but ill-conceived piece of legislation for the following reasons:

1. H7362 Will Result in Significant Increases in Labor Costs for Rhode Island Businesses

H7362 would impose a mandated 32-hour workweek while requiring the same pay for 32 hours as for 40 hours, or overtime pay for all hours worked beyond 32. In practical terms, this represents a sneaky backdoor minimum wage increase of 20% on all Rhode Island employers. Businesses simply cannot absorb the costs of such a significant minimum wage increase while also facing persistent inflation, supply chain challenges, and ongoing economic uncertainty caused by tariffs.

2. H7362 Will Result in Job Losses and Reduced Employment Opportunities

In 2022, California considered a similar legislative proposal known as AB2932. A job impact analysis cited by the California Chamber of Commerce projected more than 340,000 job losses

in a best-case scenario, with potential losses approaching one million jobs if employers restructured staffing to manage overtime exposure.

If H7362 is signed into law, thousands of hardworking Rhode Islanders will be negatively impacted. Rather than receiving higher pay for a shorter workweek, many workers will face reduced hours, job conversions to part-time status, or even layoffs. Hiring will slow, and employers will be incentivized to expand their operations outside the state.

3. H7362 Will Make Rhode Island Businesses Less Productive

For many Rhode Island businesses, productivity is strongly tied to time on task. Certain jobs simply cannot be compressed into fewer hours without a resulting loss in productivity. For example, a machine operator who must produce X widgets during a regular 40 hour workweek will not be able to produce the same number of widgets if their workweek is artificially shortened to 32 hours. The only way for the machine operator's employer to maintain productivity would be to pay costly overtime.

4. H7362 Will Result in Significant Operational and Logistical Challenges

H7362 adopts an inflexible one-size-fits-all approach that fails to account for industry realities. Healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, and retail employers rely on flexible scheduling to meet demand and maintain service levels. Mandating a rigid 32-hour standard will disrupt operations, reduce productivity, and increase compliance and litigation risks. To ensure current coverage levels, many employers would have to staff additional shifts or adopt more complex scheduling..

5. H7362 Will Place Rhode Island at a Competitive Disadvantage

If H7362 is signed into law, Rhode Island will be placed at a competitive disadvantage. Businesses that operate in states without a 32-hour workweek (currently, all of them) will have lower operating costs and will be able to undercut Rhode Island businesses with higher labor costs. Businesses involved in international commerce may also find themselves at a competitive disadvantage, as increased labor costs will compound the difficulties that they are currently experiencing due to tariffs.

6. H7362 Will Harm Rhode Island Families

At a time when Rhode Island families are struggling to afford food, housing, and other necessities, H7362 will exacerbate Rhode Island's affordability crisis. Many businesses experiencing higher labor costs will pass those costs along to consumers in the form of higher prices, reduced product quality, and reductions in service availability.

7. Better Alternatives Exist Without Employer Mandates

Workplace flexibility is best achieved through voluntary, employer-employee collaboration. Compressed workweeks, hybrid schedules, and industry-specific solutions already exist without government mandates.

Simply put, H7362 will raise labor costs, reduce employment opportunities, and undermine Rhode Island's economic competitiveness. If Rhode Island adopts a mandated 32-hour workweek, it will become a national outlier. For these reasons, the Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance respectfully urges the Committee to reject H7362.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please feel free to contact me to continue this important conversation.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gregory Tumolo

Gregory Tumolo, Executive Director
Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance