

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS



LOCAL 99

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Representative Arthur Corvese, Chairman
House Labor Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

RE: Support of H-7362 AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- HEALTH AND SAFE FAMILIES WORKPLACES ACT—WORKWEEK

Dear Chairman Corvese,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our vast network of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also serve as one, if not the only, voice of the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I am writing to you today in **support of H-7362 and also of resolution H-7367**

One core object of the IBEW is "to reduce the hours of daily labor" another is "to secure adequate pay for our work" there are many others, but these are important to this conversation. People often speak of the history of the eight hour day as if it was the final goal. It was meant to be a stepping stone to secure more time for the worker to enjoy their brief flicker of life on this earth. It was never the end goal. When we muse as to why so many are ill, angry or depressed in our great Nation, we can look at the very simple few possibilities. Workers are manacled to jobs due to the constant threat of the loss of healthcare and, the lack of time off that is compensated. That stress is enough to make the strongest of people break. Put on top of that you race to retirement only to face the fact that the USA ranks 49th in life expectancy, losing more than 4 years of precious life as compared to other wealthy nations.

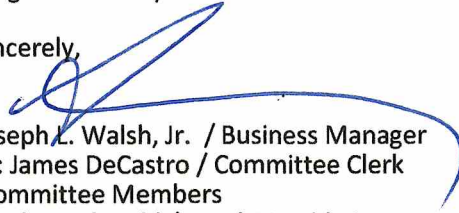
The rest of the world figured out the healthcare and paid time off issue long ago. For some reason we still can't seem to figure this out, even with models across the globe to craft a plan by. The 32 hour workweek is being tested around the world and across this Nation, and it works. It has been found that people working 32 hours a week are happier, much more productive and have a better work life balance. Whereas it is often possible to achieve an equal productivity in 32 hours than in 40 hours, why are we still wandering around pretending we can't figure it out.

The typical retort is "we can't afford it". A simple productivity study will most likely prove it is not a loss of profits in many types of businesses. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that post WWII productivity and compensation were on par. Today, productivity is more than double what the compensation is. That was never proper and it is about to get much worse. It does not take a soothsayer to point out the out of control freight train coming down the track with the AI revolution. As that continues to end careers left and right, it is extremely unlikely that anyone at the top will reach down to support those cast aside. History proves that. Perhaps workers could be treated more like the valuable asset they are in a 32 hour week without a reduction in pay. That may provide more opportunities to fill in gaps for the thousands that will soon be looking for new ways to provide for their families.

Local 99 has already engaged in sincere conversations with management in recent contract negotiations. We have not reached that goal yet, but I believe it is refreshingly inevitable.

In conclusion, I truly believe that the average American person and their family would live a much happier, healthier and longer life if they had a 32 hour work week at the compensation they earned for the labor or product they produced.

Sincerely,


Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager
cc: James DeCastro / Committee Clerk
Committee Members
Paul Macdonald / Local 99 Lobbyist
Pat Crowley/Erica Hammond RI AFL-CIO