



Rhode Island House Committee on Labor

Bill Name: H 7365

Position: Proponent

March 5, 2026

Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of [H 7365](#), legislation establishing a voluntary portable benefit plan for independent contractors in Rhode Island.

Nearly **100,000 Rhode Islanders** participate in independent work. These workers contribute meaningfully to the state's economy while valuing the flexibility to set their own schedules, serve multiple clients, and build businesses on their own terms. For many, especially women, caregivers, and entrepreneurs this flexibility is not a luxury but a necessity.

H 7365 offers a practical solution to one of the challenges independent workers face: access to benefits that are not tied to a single employer.

The bill establishes a voluntary portable benefit plan that may be offered by governmental or private entities and assigned to individual beneficiaries, rather than tied to a specific employer or hiring party. Contributions are voluntary and may not be used as a criterion for determining employment classification, and participation does not create employer liability or an employment relationship.

These guardrails are critical. They allow Rhode Island to expand access to benefits while preserving independent contractor status and avoiding unintended legal consequences.

H 7365 does not mandate participation, impose new costs, or alter employment law. It simply permits innovation so benefits can follow the worker across contracts and income streams.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support H 7365.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrice Onwuka', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Patrice Onwuka
Vice President of Economic Policy
Independent Women