



To: House Labor Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, Field Representative
Date: March 5, 2026
Re: **Unemployment Benefits For Striking Workers**
Testimony in **Support of 2026-H 7440** (Representative Furtado, et al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP) supports H 7440, which ensures that workers engaged in a lawful strike or locked out of their workplaces during a labor dispute are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

Unemployment insurance exists to protect workers who are unemployed through circumstances beyond their control. During labor disputes, workers may lose their income for extended periods while exercising legally protected collective bargaining rights. Providing access to unemployment benefits during these periods helps ensure that working families are not forced into financial crisis while negotiations continue.

The bill also recognizes that labor disputes often involve significant economic pressure on workers and their families. By allowing limited unemployment benefits during strikes or employer-imposed lockouts, this legislation helps restore balance in collective bargaining and prevents economic hardship from being used as leverage against workers.

Ensuring that workers have access to basic economic stability during labor disputes strengthens communities, protects families, and supports fair labor negotiations throughout Rhode Island.

The RIFTHP urges support of the legislation.

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