

**G R E A T E R
P R O V I D E N C E
C H A M B E R O F
C O M M E R C E**

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Chair, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

RE: OPPOSE H7440

Dear Chairman Corvese:

On behalf of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and our member businesses across Rhode Island, I write to express our opposition to H7440, which would make significant changes to Rhode Island's unemployment insurance laws related to labor disputes.

Under current law, individuals who become unemployed due to a strike or labor dispute are generally not eligible for unemployment benefits. H7440 would change that framework by allowing workers to collect unemployment benefits when they are unemployed due to a strike or lockout associated with a labor dispute.

This proposal raises serious concerns for employers and for the long-term stability of the state's unemployment insurance system. Rhode Island's unemployment insurance program is designed to provide temporary support to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. Expanding benefits to situations involving labor disputes would fundamentally alter the purpose of the system and could place additional financial pressure on the unemployment insurance trust fund, which is supported by employer contributions.

In addition, this policy change risks injecting the unemployment insurance system into the middle of private collective bargaining negotiations. Providing unemployment benefits during a labor dispute could alter the balance of negotiations and create unintended consequences for both employers and employees.

Sincerely,

Laurie White

Laurie White
President
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce