



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: House Labor Committee
From: Jeremy Sencer, Field Representative
Date: March 2, 2026
Re: **Temporary Disability Insurance Benefits**
Testimony in **Support** of 2026-H 7561 (Representative Voas, et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP) supports H 7561, which makes three targeted improvements to Rhode Island's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) programs.

First, the bill increases the TDI weekly benefit percentage beginning in 2027 and again in 2028, improving wage replacement for workers who are out due to illness or maternity-related disability. These adjustments better align benefit levels with current economic realities and help ensure that workers can afford to take medically necessary leave.

Second, H 7561 increases Temporary Caregiver Insurance benefits to eight (8) weeks per benefit year beginning January 1, 2026. This change strengthens Rhode Island's caregiver and bonding leave framework and provides additional time for workers caring for a new child or a seriously ill family member.

Third, the legislation clarifies that employers may not require employees to exhaust accrued sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, or other paid time off as a condition of receiving TDI or TCI benefits. Employees may choose to use accrued leave to supplement wage replacement, but that decision properly rests with the worker. This provision protects earned leave and prevents the erosion of collectively bargained benefits.

These targeted updates improve wage replacement, modestly expand caregiver leave, and reinforce worker protections within Rhode Island's established paid leave structure.

The RIFTHP urges support of the legislation.

356 SMITH STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-3761 (401) 273-9800 FAX (401) 331-8815

• **Maribeth K. Calabro**, President • **Maria Manzi**, Executive Assistant • **Bridget McDonough**, Administrative Assistant •
• **Michael J. Mullane**, Field Representative • **James A. Parisi**, Field Representative •
• **Christopher Lambert**, Field Representative • **Jeremy Sencer**, Field Representative •
• **Sean Doyle**, Field Representative •