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March 5, 2026

The Honorable Arthur Corvese
House Committee on Labor
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce (NRICC), which represents businesses in Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield, and Woonsocket, I write to express our opposition to H.7962, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Employment Security – General Provisions.

H.7962 would eliminate the sunset provision on an unemployment benefit that was enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the General Assembly adopted this temporary measure to allow individuals to continue collecting unemployment benefits while partially employed. At the time, this policy was intended to encourage individuals to reenter the workforce gradually, particularly when public health concerns made some hesitant to return to full-time employment.

While this approach may have been appropriate during an unprecedented public health crisis, the circumstances that justified it no longer exist. The pandemic has ended, and employers across Rhode Island are actively seeking full-time workers to meet ongoing operational demands. Making this temporary benefit permanent risks creating an unintended disincentive for individuals to return to full-time employment. It also increases the cost burden on the unemployment insurance system, which is ultimately funded by employers.

Rhode Island businesses continue to face significant workforce and cost challenges. Policies that increase unemployment insurance costs or discourage full workforce participation further strain employers who are working hard to grow and strengthen our state's economy.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to hold H.7962 for further study and take no action at this time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monika Zuluaga".

Monika P. Zuluaga
President & CEO