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March 5, 2026

The Honorable Arthur Corvese
Rhode Island House Labor Committee
Rhode Island 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 respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to H.7965, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund.

H.7965 would impose a \$1.50 per employee tax on employers to fund the creation of a new state program known as the “Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund.” While we recognize and appreciate the intent behind assisting families facing the hardship of caring for a seriously ill child, the proposed funding mechanism places yet another financial burden on Rhode Island’s employers.

According to the Department of Labor and Training’s January report, Rhode Island has approximately 513,100 nonfarm employees, including 66,200 government employees. Based on these figures, the proposed assessment would generate more than \$670,000 annually. These are dollars that would otherwise remain within the business community to support payroll, benefits, hiring, and investment. At a time when employers continue to navigate rising operating costs, workforce challenges, and economic uncertainty, additional mandated costs—however small they may appear individually—compound the financial pressures facing our state’s job creators.

For these reasons, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce respectfully urges the Committee to oppose H.7965.

Respectfully,

Monika P. Zuluaga
President & CEO