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Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business
In Opposition to House Bill No. 7968
Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance Benefits
Before the House Committee on Labor
March 5, 2026

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). A non-profit, non-partisan organization, NFIB is the nation's and Rhode Island's largest small business advocacy group. In Rhode Island, NFIB represents hundreds of small and independent business owners involved in all types of industry, including manufacturing, retail, wholesale, service, and agriculture. The average NFIB member has five employees and annual gross revenues of about \$450,000. In short, NFIB represents the small Main Street business owners from across the state. On behalf of those small and independent business employers in Rhode Island, I urge you to oppose House Bill No. 7968, expanding temporary caregiver benefits.

According to NFIB's February 2026 [Jobs Report](#), 31% of businesses still have positions they cannot fill. Despite efforts to hire, including raising compensation, owners struggle to staff their businesses and find qualified employees. In January, of the business owners surveyed, 55% of owners report attempting to hire and 88% of them discovered too few or unqualified applicants. In short, now is not the time to expand time-off policies in Rhode Island.

Anecdotally, most people have experienced waiting longer in a checkout line, an extended time before your meal is served at a restaurant, or maybe a delay in an order arriving because of these labor shortages. Increasing the amount of time off to twelve weeks for TCI will only exacerbate the existing problem. This will not only impact employers trying to run their operations, but it also means the remaining employees will have added workloads to cover for coworkers utilizing an additional 4 weeks of leave.

I strongly urge you to reject House Bill No. 7968 increasing the amount of time a worker may use for TCI, adding self-employed individuals, and expanding the reasons for leave. Thank you.