



March 5, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chairman  
House Labor Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H.7968, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance – General Provisions

Dear Chairman Corvese,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition oppose H.7968 - An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance.

H.7968 proposes the following changes to the TDI/TCI program:

- Allows self-employed individuals to opt in. Those who choose to opt in become eligible to collect benefits after contributing to the program for twelve months.
- Expands the eligibility to receive time off to include caring for a grandchild, and care recipient, which is broadly defined to include anyone for whom an employee is providing or arranging care.
- Increases to twelve weeks of TCI benefits effective January 1, 2028.

Last year, the General Assembly enacted changes to the taxable wage base effect January 1 and the weekly benefit rate which takes place beginning January 1, 2027. The Coalition didn't object to these updates to the program that looked to address concerns regarding individuals being able to utilize the leave provided in the law. However, the Coalition is concerned about potential costs to the TDI/TCI system by the revisions included in this legislation.

First, the bill proposes expanding the eligibility requirements to cover self-employed individuals. We believe it is important to understand what this means for increased exposure to the program. In addition, the legislation increases the number of benefit week to ten beginning January 1, 2027 and twelve beginning January 1, 2028. It is important to note that the number of weeks just increased to eight weeks as of January 1 based on legislation enacted into law in 2024.

Expanding TCI benefits to twelve weeks raises concerns that employees could potentially utilize multiple leave programs to take extended absences from the workplace. Employers in Rhode Island, like many other states, continue to struggle with a shortage of available workers, along with increased costs of materials and utilities as well as continued market disruptions.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

While we empathize with individuals who are facing family challenges, we cannot forget that allowing individuals to leave the workplace results in challenges for co-workers, businesses, and the customers they serve.

We appreciate the work Representative Giraldo has done over the years improving the TDI/TCI program and welcome the opportunity to continue working on these issues. However, for these reasons, we request that you take no further action on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Associated Builders and Contractors – Rhode Island Chapter

David Chenevert, Chairman, Rhode Island Business Coalition

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

Rhode Island Bankers Association

Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Rhode Island Staffing Association

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Committee

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Labor Committee members