



March 18, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese  
Chairman, House Labor Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

**Re: Oppose H 7490**

Dear Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Retail Federation, I write to express our opposition to **H 7490, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- MINIMUM WAGES--OVERTIME** which would significantly expand overtime eligibility by raising the salary threshold for executive, administrative, and professional employees.

By way of quick introduction, The Rhode Island Retail Federation is an entity of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce which has as its members large and small retail owners and operators throughout the state. As a subset of the National Retail Federation, we work passionately to stand up for the people, policies and ideas that help the retail industry succeed. Nationally, retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, contributing approximately \$5.3 trillion to the annual GDP.

While we appreciate the intent to enhance worker protection, H 7490 would impose substantial new costs and operational challenges on Rhode Island retailers—particularly small and mid-sized businesses - that are already navigating a difficult economic environment. The bill phases in increasingly high salary

thresholds tied to multiples of the minimum wage, ultimately requiring employers to either substantially raise salaries or convert salaried employees to hourly status with overtime eligibility.

This approach would have several unintended consequences. Employers may be forced to reduce workplace flexibility, limit hours, or restructure positions in ways that diminish professional growth opportunities. Many salaried employees value the autonomy and predictability that comes with exempt status, and this legislation risks undermining those arrangements. Additionally, the tiered structure based on employer size creates further complexity and administrative burden, particularly for growing retailers that may cross threshold levels.

Rhode Island already struggles to remain competitive with neighboring states. Imposing new labor cost mandates of this magnitude—especially on retailers with more than 50 employees—could discourage expansion, hiring, and long-term investment in our state.

We respectfully urge the Committee to consider the cumulative impact of this proposal alongside other pending labor mandates and to avoid policies that may unintentionally hinder economic growth and job creation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie White

President, Rhode Island Retail Federation and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

