



March 18, 2026

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

**Re: ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS --
MINIMUM WAGES H7769, H7770, and H7771**

Dear Chairman Corvese and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (RIMA), representing more than 1,600 manufacturers—primarily small and mid-sized businesses—and over 60,000 employees, we respectfully submit our strong opposition to: ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- MINIMUM WAGES H7769, H7770, and H7771, which propose significant increases to Rhode Island’s minimum wage.

Employers across our state are already navigating persistent inflation, rising energy and utility costs, and ongoing uncertainty driven by supply chain disruptions, global conflicts, and tariffs. These factors have substantially increased the cost of doing business and constrained manufacturers’ ability to absorb additional mandated expenses.

H7769 would raise the minimum wage to twenty dollars (\$20) per hour by January 1, 2027. H7771 would increase it further to twenty-four dollars (\$24) per hour by January 1, 2029, while H7770 would tie future increases to inflation through the Consumer Price Index. Taken together, these proposals represent a rapid and inflexible escalation in labor costs.

For Rhode Island manufacturers, labor is among the largest operating expenses. Increases of this magnitude would force difficult decisions across our membership, including reducing employee hours, delaying new hiring, postponing capital investments, increasing prices for customers, or limiting growth. For many manufacturers—particularly small and mid-sized firms—there is little to no margin to absorb such increases without consequence.

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association
Manufacturing • Innovation • Workforce



Increasingly, our members are not only choosing not to expand in Rhode Island—they are actively evaluating exit strategies. When faced with rising costs, regulatory burdens, and regional competition, manufacturers have options. These proposals risk accelerating the relocation of jobs, production, and investment out of state, weakening Rhode Island’s industrial base and long-term economic stability.

RIMA is also concerned that the automatic inflation adjustment proposed in H7770 removes the ability of policymakers to reassess economic conditions before additional increases occur. This rigid approach does not account for economic downturns, industry-specific pressures, or regional competitiveness.

Rhode Island already faces higher operating costs than many neighboring states, particularly in energy and regulatory compliance. These additional mandates would further erode the state’s competitiveness and discourage both retention and expansion of manufacturing operations.

RIMA and its members strongly support policies that expand economic opportunity and improve quality of life for workers. Many in our industry built their careers through hard work, often balancing multiple jobs while gaining skills and education. Today, however, manufacturers face a growing skills gap as fewer individuals pursue hands-on trades and technical careers.

At the same time, advancements in artificial intelligence are creating new opportunities for workers to develop skills, increase productivity, and enhance their earning potential. Public policy should focus on supporting workforce development, training, and career pathways that align with these opportunities – particularly AI education—rather than adopting measures that may unintentionally reduce entry-level job availability.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose H7769, H7770, and H7771, and instead pursue balanced, flexible policies that support sustainable wage growth, job creation, workforce development, and long-term economic competitiveness in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Travis



Melissa Travis
President/CEO
Rhode Island Manufacturers Association
melissa@mfgri.com

