

The Honorable Arthur Corvese
Chair, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island House of Representative
Providence, RI 02903



Subject: House Bill 7961

Dear Chairman Corvese:

On behalf of the member companies of The Rhode Island Chapter of Associated General Contractors (RIAGC), I write regarding House Bill 7961 concerning payment of wages.

Wage violations and non-payment of wages are unlawful and immoral, and RIAGC has strongly supported efforts by the RI Department of Labor and Training (DLT) and the Attorney General (AG) to combat and investigate labor violations that impact workers. RIAGC also supports additional investigators to improve site checks and ensure that complaints are investigated promptly and adjudicated to hold unscrupulous companies accountable.

RIAGC believes it is important to address some key concerns and model this bill after similar legislation in Massachusetts (a copy of this bill, H2094, is attached.) We are appreciative that the advocates of this bill have welcomed suggested changes and we are committed to work together to ensure this legislation targets the correct audience - the unscrupulous individuals who unlawfully steal wages. Key areas of concern include:

Limiting Joint Employer Liability: Establish a clearly defined notice period, define a path of resolution for employers ensnared in joint liability disputes, and restrict liability to a lookback period. These provisions will ensure that lead contractors have the authority to maintain accountability within their projects.

Protection from Liability: Specify protections from liability, including certified payroll and sign-in procedures, giving general contractors clear guidelines to follow.

Transparency and Accountability: Require the establishment of a publicly available dashboard of logged complaints, enforcement actions, and debarments brought pursuant to this section. The Attorney General of Massachusetts has such a dashboard available and updated on its website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/fair-labor-division-data>.

RIAGC appreciates the efforts to collaboratively find common ground on this issue. In addition to being a highly regulated industry among health, safety, and labor agencies, construction is a unique industry that involves multiple, dependent stakeholders and linkages among labor, contractors, suppliers, and owners. Thank you for your time and we appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kerrie Bennett
Executive Director