



**2026 EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

Chair

Steve Noyes
PKF O'Connor Davies LLP

Chair Elect

Betty Robson
OIA Global

Secretary

Jean Harrington
Duffy & Sweeney, LTD

Treasurer

Michael Souza
Landmark Medical

Immediate Past Chair

Jennifer Morrison
Amica

**Executive Committee
At-Large Member**

Elizabeth McClaine
Neighborhood Health Plan RI

Amy Vogel
Dr. Day Care

Legal Counsel

Kelley O'Donnell, Esq.
Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP

President/CEO

Monika P. Zuluaga

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Arthur Corvese
Chairman, House Committee on Labor
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Chairman Corvese and Committee Members:

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket. We write to respectfully oppose the passage of H.7964, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – The Rhode Island Opportunity for Employee Ownership Act.

H.7964 requires a majority of businesses in Rhode Island to give all full-time and part-time employees thirty-days-notice of an intent to sell the business. This requirement applies to every business employing between three and five hundred employees that is privately held and not a publicly traded company. It also exempts businesses being sold to family members, sold due to a death or medical condition or compelled by a court order. Once the notice is given, the employees have thirty days “to officially initiate a process to potentially purchase the business.” After this date, the owner has the right to “share the intent to sell publicly.” It is unclear if the owner can proceed to sell the property to another party following the thirty-day notice period. It is also not clear what happens if the employees initiate a process to potentially purchase the business. If an offer to purchase is not put forth, can the business be sold to someone else, or is the owner allowed to entertain offers from other potential buyers but not move forward until an employee actual offer is made?

We appreciate the sponsor’s attempt to amend last year’s bill based on testimony; however, the language and intent are still problematic.



This process is unfair to the business owner who has worked to build a business. The business is a person's asset and a state requirement to hold the asset for thirty days, perhaps longer, and dictate who receives initial rights to purchase that asset could deter other potential buyers from coming forward. Who wants to put time and effort into evaluating a business if another buyer gets basically a first right of refusal?

H.7964, while well meaning, will become a deterrent to starting and growing a business in Rhode Island.

For these reasons, The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce asks the committee to take no action on H.7964.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monika Zuluaga".

Monika P. Zuluaga
President & CEO