



Representative Arthur Corvese, Chair
House Labor Committee

March 30, 2026

Support for Support for H7966 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Division of Occupational Health & H7964

Chair Corvese and Members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Power wishes to express its support for H7966, a critical piece of legislation aimed at safeguarding our workforce from the dangers of extreme temperatures. This bill, introduced by Senator DiPalma, exemplifies RIWFP's long-standing commitment to advancing the health, safety, and well-being of Rhode Island's working families. We also are in support of H7964, which would establish an opportunity for employee ownership at Rhode Island businesses.

The necessity of such legislation has never been more apparent. As we face increasingly unpredictable weather patterns due to climate change, the risks associated with working in extreme temperatures—both high and low—are escalating. These conditions not only pose immediate health risks but also significantly impact productivity and the economic security of our workforce.

This bill proposes comprehensive measures to mitigate these risks, including access to adequate shade, rest breaks, and protective equipment, which are fundamental to ensuring a safe working environment. These measures are not luxuries but essential rights that every worker deserves, aligning with RIWFP's vision for a just and equitable workplace.

Moreover, the inclusion of mandatory training for recognizing the signs of temperature-related illnesses and the emphasis on maintaining functional heating and cooling equipment demonstrate a proactive approach to employee health. This bill acknowledges the varied environments Rhode Island's workforce operates in—from vehicles to warehouses to outdoor settings—ensuring tailored protections that address the specific needs of each workplace. The bill's provisions for non-discrimination against employees affected by extreme temperatures also reflects RIWFP's stance on fair employment practices and the importance of upholding workers' rights under all conditions.

We also strongly support H7964 to increase opportunities for employee ownership. At a time when our economy is increasingly stratified, worker ownership is more important than ever.

In closing, the RI Working Families Party urges the committee to consider the far-reaching benefits of this legislation, not only for the health and safety of our workers but for the broader impact on our state's economic well-being and productivity.

Respectfully submitted,

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler
Progressive Governance Director
Rhode Island Working Families Power