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Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business
In Opposition to House Bill Nos. 7966 and 8311
Relating to Health and Safety – Extreme Temperature Employee Protection Act
Relating to Health and Safety – Division of Occupational Health
Before the House Committee on Labor
March 30, 2026

Chairman Corvese and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). A non-profit, non-partisan organization, NFIB is the nations and Rhode Island's largest small business advocacy group. In Rhode Island, NFIB represents hundreds of small and independent business owners involved in all types of industry, including manufacturing, retail, wholesale, service, and agriculture. The average NFIB member has five employees and annual gross revenues of about \$450,000. In short, NFIB represents the small Main Street business owners from across the state. On behalf of those small and independent business employers in Rhode Island, I urge you to oppose House Bill No. 7966 and 8311, regarding work requirements in various temperatures.

This legislation unfairly assumes small businesses are not already working with their employees in hot and cold temperatures. House Bill Nos. 7966 and 8311 mandates additional paid breaks and imposes other requirements on small businesses, including those businesses with workers in vehicles, warehouses, and performing outdoor duties. The proposal also demands additional quarterly training for supervisors and managers overseeing workers performing in hot and cold temperatures. Additionally, workers are required to attend quarterly state-created tutorials during the workday. It is worth nothing that this legislation has a comparatively low threshold for the definition of cold temperature (below 32 or 30 degrees depending on the bill), as the average temperature in Providence for January and February is 29 degrees. The bill mandates employers provide items like jackets, hats, cooling vests, and even sunscreen for their workers, adding to the already high cost of doing business in Rhode Island.

House Bill Nos. 7966 and 8311 unfairly exposes small businesses to potential fine from the Attorney General. These proposals are excessive since businesses in Rhode Island are already subjected to both state and federal laws to keep workers safe in a wide range of conditions. Would this new mandate also apply to state and municipal employees? Would those collecting trash on the streets of Providence in July require cooling vests? Would lifeguards at municipal pools during the summer be

provided with sunscreen? Would a parking attendant in Cranston be provided city issued gloves on a cold day in January? Some June evenings the temperature rises at State House during June hearings when the building reaches sweltering, hot temperatures, will staff have access to cooling stations?

I strongly urge you to reject House Bill Nos. 7966 and 8311 which seems excessive and could result in small businesses facing costly fines. Business owners already work with their employees to keep them safe and must follow existing state and federal safety laws. Thank you.