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Monika P. Zuluaga

April 15, 2026

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

Dear Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce (NRICC), which represents businesses across Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield, and Woonsocket, I write to express our strong opposition to H.7291, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Labor Relations Act.

H.7291 would permit a union to be certified as the representative of a company's employees through the collection of authorization cards, effectively bypassing the longstanding secret-ballot election process. This "card check" approach raises serious concerns regarding employee free choice and the potential for coercion.

Unlike secret-ballot elections—where employees can make decisions privately and without external influence—card signing is inherently public. Employees may feel pressured by coworkers or union organizers to sign authorization cards to avoid conflict or workplace tension. In some cases, individuals may be led to believe that signing a card merely initiates further discussion or triggers a future election. In reality, once a majority of cards is obtained, a union may be certified immediately, without any opportunity for a confidential vote. Moreover, these cards are legally binding and can be difficult to revoke once signed.

The importance of preserving secret-ballot elections has been consistently recognized. In *Brown-Forman Corp. v. National Labor Relations Board* (6th Cir. Mar. 6, 2026), the Sixth Circuit reaffirmed that "secret elections are generally the most satisfactory—indeed the preferred—method of ascertaining whether a union has majority support," emphasizing that this preference reflects the fundamental goal of respecting employees' true and uninfluenced choices.

The General Assembly recently enacted "captive audience" legislation to protect employees from employer coercion in matters of unionization, by banning attendance at mandatory meetings or reading mandatory communications.



That policy was grounded in the principle that workers should be free from undue pressure when making such decisions. H.7291, however, introduces a comparable risk of coercion—this time from union organizers or advocates—by encouraging public expressions of support rather than confidential voting.

If it is inappropriate for employers to compel participation in discussions prior to a secret-ballot election, it is equally inappropriate to require employees to publicly declare their position through signed authorization cards that may be used to determine representation without a vote.

**For these reasons, the Chamber respectfully urges the Committee to protect employees' right to a private, pressure-free decision-making process by opposing H.7291.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Respectfully,

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

Monika P. Zuluaga  
President & CEO