



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Arthur J. Corvese, Chair House Labor Committee
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: HOUSE 7361 AN ACT RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES AND HOSPITALS -- QUALITY SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS ACT OF 2026

Thursday, April 30, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-01110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

The Commission finds this bill potentially harmful

We support the rights of workers to collective bargaining to ensure fair wages and fair and equitable working conditions. The work performed by personal care workers is essential for allowing people with disabilities to receive the care they need and remain in their own community. It also means a higher quality of life and the ability to participate more in their community thanks to the assistance they receive. Without this important role, many people would be forced to live in institutions.

The role of collective bargaining is to balance the power between the employer and the employees. It has historically been essential to ensure fair wages and workplace safety. In the case of self-directed services however, the employer-employee relationship is between the person with a disability and the worker. The program was deliberately structured in this manner. The goal of self directed is to allow the individual to have full control over the selection of their staff and how those services are delivered. State involvement is limited to providing the funding, including determining wage rates. Private provider agencies are limited to acting as a fiscal intermediary only. Individuals who use this program are the employers of record. They must apply for an EIN number and file the necessary paperwork.

Adding a collective bargaining unit could have serious consequences for people with disabilities. The union has made many efforts in good faith to address the concerns of the people who use

this program, but there are still issues that should be worked out. We suggest that the union continue these discussions.

The Commission will also continue to advocate for increased wages for personal care workers in legislation and in the budget.