



May 19, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Chairman, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

Oppose H. 8505

Dear Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, I write to express concerns with H. 8505, the “Workplace Psychological Safety Act.” While we share the goal of ensuring respectful and professional workplaces, we believe this legislation would create significant legal and operational challenges for Rhode Island employers and could produce unintended consequences for both businesses and workers.

The bill would establish a new private right of action allowing employees to bring claims alleging workplace bullying based on broadly defined conduct that may include management decisions such as workload expectations, criticism of performance, or changes in job responsibilities.

While these issues are important to address internally within organizations, the proposed standard is subjective and may lead to a substantial increase in litigation, even in situations involving ordinary workplace disagreements or performance management.

Employers in Rhode Island are already subject to extensive federal and state laws addressing discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and workplace safety. H. 8505 would create a new layer of liability beyond these existing protections without clearly defining objective thresholds for enforcement. The result could be uncertainty for employers and supervisors who must routinely make management decisions necessary to operate a business.

We are also concerned about the bill’s potential impact on workers’ compensation claims and workplace liability exposure. Expanding legal claims related to workplace stress and interpersonal conflicts may increase claims tied to psychological injury, placing additional

pressure on the workers' compensation system and potentially increasing insurance costs for employers across the state. These costs ultimately affect hiring, wages, and the ability of Rhode Island businesses—particularly small employers—to remain competitive.

Additionally, the prohibition on arbitration agreements and the limitations on non-disclosure agreements related to workplace disputes may undermine established mechanisms that many employers and employees rely on to resolve disputes efficiently and confidentially.

Rhode Island employers are committed to fostering respectful workplaces and addressing inappropriate conduct when it occurs. However, we believe H. 8505, as drafted, creates a broad and uncertain legal framework that could increase litigation while doing little to improve workplace culture.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, continuous line that starts with a horizontal stroke, then curves upwards and to the right, then downwards and to the right, and finally continues as a long horizontal line.

Laurie White
President
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce