

To the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor,

My name is Kelsey Rilo and I am here to provide written testimony in support of the following House Bills: 5402, 5404, 5474, 5583, 5720, 5719, and 5851.

As both a resident of Providence and a member of the Labor Committee of the DSA, I fully support any legislation that protects and expands worker's rights, as well as their understanding of those rights.

After watching the past year unfold it is increasingly obvious that the current way we treat our workers is Not sustainable. During the pandemic our frontline workers have been tending to our communities with no current hazard pay. People are burnt out, they're getting physically ill, they're emotionally exhausted, and having mental health issues. These bills look to address some of the pain points associated with being a worker in Rhode Island right now.

I support HB 5402's goal to keep bargaining agreements in effect while union members are engaged in contract negotiations. Nothing should be taken away from workers and workers should not be punished or have their rights stripped away while they are in negotiation.

I support HB 5404's goal to award 25% of public works project contracts to minorities. Rhode Island had a lot of issues this past year with racism - from the statue to just Recently removing "plantations" from the name. The state needs to do better for the minority residents of this state. Grant them more contracts.

I support HB 5474's goal of providing worker's compensation benefits to frontline and essential workers who are impacted by COVID-19. If our frontline workers are expected to be working to serve the public during a deadly pandemic, then yes, they deserve compensation if they are impacted by said deadly pandemic.

I support HB 5583's goal of granting additional protections of the rights of pregnant workers. Did you know that the number one group in poverty are women aged 25-34? Followed by women aged 18-24, and then women aged 35-55. See a pattern? This bill does the bare minimum of providing the pregnant part-time worker time off, allowing it to be unpaid. Which is inhumane. So yes, I do believe the absolute least this committee can do is vote in support of pregnant workers getting to tend to their health and safety during their pregnancy.

I support HB 5720's goal of increasing paternal and family leave up to 26 weeks. I don't think we have to pretend we don't know other countries give new family's up to a year off to tend to the challenges and changes that come with a new life in the house. Being with their newborn is one of the most crucial things new parents can do as physical contact and interaction with their parents are vital for a baby's development. Stop ignoring science, stop separating families for more profit. Support parents and this extra time off.

I support HB 5719's goal of explaining in more clear terms on the paystub how wages were calculated and what deductions were made. I honestly cannot for the life of me understand why

this isn't currently happening, why would we ever deny workers an understanding of how their paycheck is calculated? This seems like a very easy one to support.

I support HB 5851's goal of repealing the act that allows directors to pay workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage. The fact that this could happen is vile and shameful and everyone should be in support of repealing this.

The workers are the backbone of our state, take care of them. They've been taking care of you for no hazard pay and through rushed re-openings, risking the health and safety of themselves and their families.

**Thank you,
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