



Honorable Anastasia Williams
Chair, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

June 8, 2021

RE: Testimony on H.6352 – An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Dignity at Work

Dear Chair Williams and Committee Members,

The Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association (RILBMDA) would like to provide testimony in opposition to bill H.6352 – An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Dignity at Work. This legislation would establish the Dignity at Work Act, to provide workers with more protection from bullying and harassment in the workplace.

While we appreciate the laudable intent of this legislation, it would place an undue burden on the RILBMDA membership. As drafted, the current definition of “workplace bullying and general harassment” is too vague, allows too much room for individual interpretation and could lead to numerous and costly lawsuits for small businesses across the state.

RILBMDA members provide a safe and positive workplace for their employees. H.6352 would create an impossible scenario where employers are forced to monitor the countless potential activities that may or may not occur daily. Under the provision of this bill, employers would be required to spend more time observing for bullying-type behaviors than operating their business. Add to this the possibility of being liable for the actions committed by customers and other non-employees and you are creating another barrier toward attracting and maintaining successful businesses in the State of Rhode Island.

With these concerns in mind, we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

Terrance Martiesian
RILBMDA Lobbyist

The RILBMDA represents independent lumber and building material dealers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and other associated businesses in the state of Rhode Island. The lumber and building materials industry employs more than 7,000 Rhode Island residents and has an annual payroll of more than \$300 million.



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