



**Champion Advocacy  
Associates**

February 8, 2023

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
House Committee on Small Business  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Committee Members:

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket. The Chamber wishes to be on record in support of H.5264, An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Zoning Ordinances.

H.5264 creates the “Outdoor Dining Act” and prohibits the state or any municipality from adopting any rule or law to ban outdoor dining, or to limit the time of year outdoor dining may be offered. With the COVID 19 emergency poised to come to an end in May, food establishments are concerned they will be forced to abandon the equipment purchased through the “Take it Outside” program. Any establishment that wishes to continue to serve food and drinks outside would still have to comply with all accessibility requirements under law.

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce spent countless hours trying to assist businesses in their efforts to stay afloat during the COVID crises. The “Take it Outside” program was a successful program used by many restaurants. The Chamber helped facilitate the distribution of over \$400,000 in aid to Northern RI businesses. Other non-profits also distributed these funds. It would be a terrible waste of dollars to now require these businesses to moth-ball the equipment purchased. For that reason, the Chamber supports the passage of H.5264.

Thank you for your consideration on these matters.

Respectfully,

Lenette Forry-Menard  
Legislative Lobbyist

10 Lincoln Drive, North Smithfield RI 02896

tel. (401) 374-0456

fax (401) 597-5977

lenetteforry@gmail.com