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March 19, 2026

Chairman Evan P. Shanley
House Committee on State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Opposition to HR-7387 - Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution of the State – Line-Item Veto

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the 80,000 members of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and our affiliated local unions, I write in opposition to House Resolution no. 7387 which proposes the amendment of our state constitution to grant the Governor a line-item veto authority on the budget and other appropriation bills.

The state budget is not simply a financial document; it is the result of direct engagement between constituents and their elected representatives. Our members live and work in communities across the state, and they rely on the ability to advocate directly with their legislators to ensure that the budget reflects the needs of working Rhode Islanders, supports public services, and invests in its workforce.

Granting the Governor line-item veto authority would fundamentally alter that process. Under such a system, appropriations negotiated through the legislative process, and supported by the representatives elected by our members, could be unilaterally removed after the fact by a single office. This would effectively strip working people of the meaningful opportunity to secure commitments through their own elected officials, replacing a representative negotiation with a centralized executive decision.

The current process ensures that budget priorities emerge from deliberation among many elected representatives who are directly accountable to their constituents. Our members value and depend on that access. When workers advocate for investments in their communities, they do so through the legislators they elect and hold accountable.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO believes that granting line-item veto authority would diminish the role of representative democracy in the budget process and weaken the ability of working Rhode Islanders to effectively participate in decisions that affect their everyday lives.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO respectfully urges the Committee to reject HR-7387.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica A. Hammond
Legislative Director, Rhode Island AFL-CIO