



194 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02908-4914
Telephone: (401) 751-7100 Fax: (401) 331-8533
www.RhodeIslandAFLCIO.org • info@RIAFLCIO.com

Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

April 9, 2026

Susan R. Donovan
Chair, House Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: RI AFL-CIO Testimony in support of H-7031 - Create a Joint Study Commission of Hospital Safe Staffing

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, representing more than 80,000 union members and their families across the state, I write in support of House Bill 7031 introduced by Senator Fellela. This legislation, when passed, will authorize a structured review and recommendations to the General Assembly on hospital safe staffing.

Of the affiliates the RI AFL-CIO represents, SEIU 1199, the United Nurses and Allied Professionals (UNAP), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters local 251 (IBT 351), the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP), and Laborers International Union of North America local 808 (LIUNA 808), all represent healthcare workers. Collectively, they **represent over 10,000 healthcare professionals whose work becomes that much heavier under the weight of chronic understaffing.**

Amplified in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, frontline workers have argued for years that staffing decisions are too often made by administrators focused on cost – not care. H-7031 would guarantee labor seats on the commission and **require direct care workers and patient advocates be represented to shape recommendations.**

In Rhode Island and nationally, nurses and caregivers have testified that understaffing leads to delayed care and higher complication rates. Overworked staff are more likely to make errors, burnout, and become injured. Units become unsafe when ratios are stretched due to high turnover and instability.

Patrick Crowley [President](#) • Karen Hazard [Secretary-Treasurer](#)
Cheryl Masciarelli [Office Manager](#) • Autumn Guillotte [Political Director](#) • Erica Hammond [Legislative Director](#)





194 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02908-4914
Telephone: (401) 751-7100 Fax: (401) 331-8533
www.RhodeIslandAFLCIO.org • info@RIAFLCIO.com

Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

Safe staffing is a patient safety issue, a workforce issue, and an accreditation issue. All of which are deeply important to the RI AFL-CIO and the state as a whole.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO urges the committee to support H-7031. Thank you for your time and consideration, along with the opportunity to provide written testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions, 401-751-7100.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Autumn Guillotte'.

Autumn Guillotte
Political Director, Rhode Island AFL-CIO

