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ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND

TESTIMONY ON 26-S 2342, RELSTING TO RESTRICTIONS ON SELF-SERVICE CHECKOUT STATIONS ACT March 24, 2026

The ACLU of Rhode Island has no position on this bill in general or its intent. However, if the bill is favorably considered, we urge an amendment to the “violations” section, which is designed to protect grocery store employees from retaliation for reporting violations of the self-checkout restrictions established by the legislation.

In that regard, the bill provides that an “employee of a grocery store who alleges retaliation by their employer for submitting a complaint alleging violation(s) of this chapter may bring a cause of action in superior court.” [Page 2, lines 29-31]. However, the bill provides no details about this cause of action or the remedies that are available to a victim of retaliation. We believe it would be helpful to address this gap.

Rhode Island presently has a robust whistleblower protection law for employees, codified at R.I.G.L. §28-50-1. That law provides specific remedies that are available for violations, including reinstatement if the employee is fired, monetary damages, and attorneys’ fees. We urge that the violations section of this bill be amended to refer to the whistleblowers’ statute so that there is no confusion about that law’s applicability to victims of retaliation under this bill. In the alternative, we would recommend the bill be amended to explicitly include the list of remedies that are contained in the whistleblower statute.

Thank you for considering our views.