

March 24, 2026

RI Senate Commerce Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: S2642, S2644, S2428 Fair Price Grocery Agenda

Dear Members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

Our firm represents many food providers and interests in Rhode Island. We commonly advocate for the elimination of barriers to a new competitive energy and a new food economy. I am also a volunteer participant on Local Return's public awareness committee. I write in support of S2642, S2644 and S2428.

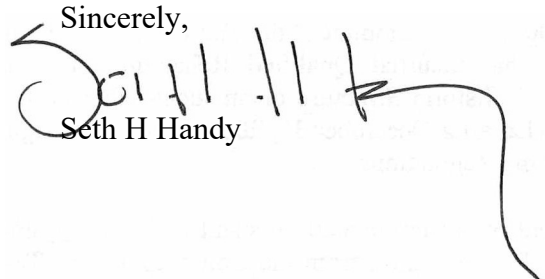
We support S2644 because large grocery chains should not be able to put restrictive covenants on real estate that prohibit future siting of grocery stores in our communities. The Providence Journal reports that Stop & Shop and its subsidiaries have used restrictive covenants to prevent other grocery stores from opening in at least 3 communities – Woonsocket, Warwick and Westerly (ProJo, 2/9/26). Stop & Shop uses holding companies to acquire properties that it allows to remain vacant, or subleases the space to businesses that aren't competitors. It reports that Walmart has executed similar strategies. That is anti-competitive, monopoly behavior that raises food costs and hurts our citizens. Reportedly, after Washington, DC, cracked down on the practice, 20 new grocery stores opened in Washington in five years, according to local officials. Rhode Island has one of the least competitive retail grocery markets in the country, with Stop & Shop claiming 42.8% of the market share.

We support S2428, the dynamic pricing bill, because real time manipulation of grocery prices based on monitored factors like increased demand unfairly hurts consumers. That inherent price advantage makes it too difficult for new market entrants to compete and, thereby, help us to bring grocery prices down and improve access and convenience.

We support S2642 because RI needs to empower our attorney general to enforce the Robinson-Patman act to weed out anti-competitive grocery supply practices among suppliers to large grocery retailers and protect the public interest in the affordability, health and accessibility of groceries in our communities.

Please pass these 3 bills to give RI citizens access to fair grocery prices. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,


Seth H Handy