



Member Focused; Results Driven

March 24, 2026

Oppose

The Honorable Robert Britto
Chair: Senate Commerce Committee
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
The State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Senate Bill 2642 – “Price Tags Act”

Dear Chair Britto:

My name is Scott Bromberg, and I am the President & CEO of the Rhode Island Food Dealers Association, a trade association established in 1909 to serve the needs of the food industry in the State of Rhode Island. Our membership includes chain and independent grocery retailers, wholesalers, suppliers, distributors, food manufacturers, brokers, and other organizations affiliated with the food industry in our state. As an industry, we are among the state’s largest employers and revenue generators.

On behalf of our members, I would like to take this opportunity to register our group’s opposition to Senate Bill 2642. We believe that while this bill has the best intentions it is unclear how it protects Rhode Island residents. The intent of this bill is to attempt to ensure that small businesses have the same pricing available to them as the dominant stores in the industry. We fear that this is not only not extremely difficult to track and enforce, but may create a more hostile environment for smaller retailers.

This bill is based on the Robinson-Patman Act of 1936, which is a federal anti-trust law that prohibits anticompetitive price discrimination and requires sellers to treat competing buyers equally. If this is a federal law, why do we need state legislation?

The bill defines covered goods as eligible foods and consumer packaged goods excluding gasoline, prescription drugs, tobacco and alcoholic beverages. In addition, the channel of trade definition goes far beyond just grocery stores to also include mass merchandisers, online retailers, discounters, convenience stores and other retail platforms that have a segment of retail competing for grocery dollars. Both the scope of items and businesses within this bill are extremely varied and can lead to a lot of confusion. This is a general retail bill and not an exclusive grocery store bill as indicated in the title.

RIFDA

~ 40 Higginson Ave. ~ Central Falls, RI 02863 ~

~ Tel: 401-431-0880 ~ Fax: 401-434-2496 ~ sbromberg@rifda.com ~ www.rifda.com ~

The basis of this bill is the same item/quantity of a given covered good. If two covered retailers/wholesalers are buying the exact same item in the exact same quantity, then you request pricing and sales contracts. This is rarely the case. Many of our members receive goods from out-of-state wholesalers/distributors and manufacturers, and they have different ways of distributing to their locations. In some cases, the retailers' purchasing departments are out of state, and they order in vastly different quantities. It would be extremely difficult to establish the same item/quantity in the case of a smaller retailer and larger retailers. Therefore, it would be difficult to enforce and not get the desired effect. We also believe that this will dissuade manufacturers and suppliers from wanting to do business in Rhode Island and could lead to increased costs at the registers and decreased sales across the board.

This bill is more feasible for businesses that are the same size and may order a case or a pallet of a covered item. Typically, these are smaller/local retailers. A smaller/local retailer would have a better chance of receiving the same pricing as another smaller/local retailer. We believe this will create a hostile small business environment.

The Rhode Island Food Dealers Association believes Senate Bill 2642 has the best intentions, but if passed, it could create a more hostile environment for small businesses. The proposal is also extremely difficult to enforce and could deter manufacturers and suppliers from wanting to do business in Rhode Island. Therefore, it may harm Rhode Islanders as opposed to protecting them. It is for these reasons that we oppose bill Senate Bill 2642.

Sincerely,



Scott Bromberg
President & CEO
RI Food Dealers Association

CC: Hon. Valerie J. Lawson, President
Rhode Island State Senate

Hon. Frank A. Ciccone, III, Majority Leader
Rhode Island State Senate

Margaret Hogan Sweeney, Esq.
M. Teresa Paiva Weed, Esq. &
Jack Tear
F/S Capitol Consulting, LLC