



State of Rhode Island
Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos

March 24, 2026

Senator Robert Britto
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee
82 Smith St, Room 212
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Letter of Support for S2642: An Act Relating To Commercial Law -- General Regulatory Provisions --
Protecting Rhode Islanders From Coercive Economic Tactics At Grocery Stores

Dear Senator Britto:

I write to you in strong support of S2642: An Act Relating To Commercial Law -- General Regulatory Provisions -- Protecting Rhode Islanders From Coercive Economic Tactics At Grocery Stores. This bill would create a new chapter in the General Laws to protect Rhode Island consumers from coercive tactics at grocery stores.

Since the 1930s, the United States government has had a law on the books empowering them to go after sellers accused of charging competing buyers different prices for the same quantity and quality of goods. Essentially, if two competing grocery stores are trying to buy the same quantity of goods from a seller, the seller must provide sufficient reason (cost of transportation, advertising, etc.) to justify charging different prices.

Starting in the 1980s, when the federal government ceased enforcing this rule, large retailers have taken advantage of this new regulatory environment to coerce manufacturers into wholesale agreements that offer the retailers exclusive and advantageous deals compared to their competitors. This has contributed to a consolidation in the grocery market, forcing consumers into a smaller number of nationwide corporations and compelling them to pay prices that are set not by market demands, but by the bottom line of these major corporations.

This bill mirrors federal legislation by requiring suppliers to offer the same quantity and quality of goods at an equal price unless they can justify their price discrimination and prohibiting dominant retailers from coercing suppliers into offering exclusive deals. This bill also empowers the attorney general to take action against retailers accused of violating the statute.

Rhode Islanders deserve to access the highest quality foods at prices that are affordable to them. For this reason, and many others, I urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sabina Matos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sabina Matos
Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor
CC: Senator Robert Britto