

April 14, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

On behalf of the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), I would like to express our opposition to Senate Bill 2774. This legislation would prohibit the sale of safe, regulated weight management and muscle-building dietary supplements to consumers under the age of eighteen in the State of Rhode Island. Such a policy runs counter to effective public health efforts and would create unintended consequences for Rhode Island's consumers and overall economy.

CRN is the leading trade association representing dietary supplement and functional food manufacturers and ingredient suppliers. The dietary supplement industry is important to Rhode Island's economy, accounting for over \$100 million in total economic impact and \$17 million in tax revenue.¹ Additionally, dietary supplement products are used by millions of Americans to help maintain a healthy lifestyle.

We strongly sympathize with anyone impacted by eating disorders and thus respect the intent of the legislation. However, this proposal fails to help those suffering from this condition. This misguided approach has erroneously associated muscle-building and weight-loss dietary supplements with eating disorders among underage individuals, despite no scientific evidence of a causal relationship. In fact, a 2023 peer-reviewed paper examining the complex and multifaceted risk factors associated with this condition found no known causal relationship between the use of dietary supplements and the onset of eating disorders.

(<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10181165/>) Eating disorders are complex mental health conditions with a myriad of contributing factors, and scapegoating dietary supplements does not address their root causes. Further, a 2022 peer-reviewed paper examining dietary supplements for weight management concluded that common ingredients, including ones that could be restricted by this bill, are safe when taken as directed.

(<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9099655/>)

Instead of enhancing public health, this proposal would harm retailers and consumers alike. If enacted, this bill would have far-reaching economic effects on Rhode Island by placing new compliance burdens on retail establishments, and businesses across the State would be penalized and punished for selling legal products regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under a comprehensive framework governing manufacturing, labeling, and safety.

¹ Economic impact study of the dietary supplement industry. Economic Impact Study of the Dietary Supplement Industry Council for Responsible Nutrition. (2024, January 23). <https://www.crnusa.org/resources/economic-impact-study-dietary-supplement-industry>

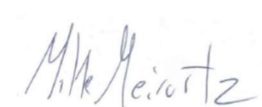
To comply, retailers will be tasked with multiple burdensome requirements, under threat of penalization. First, retailers would be tasked with determining what constitutes a covered weight loss or muscle building product. They would then need to reconfigure stores to remove large amounts of products from self-service shelves, and either enclose them in locked cases or move them behind the counter. This provision is especially troublesome since it limits access to FDA-regulated products for all consumers, preventing all shoppers from evaluating which supplements might be right for them. This creates a significant impact on local retailers, including grocers, health food stores, and pharmacies, and would likely add to necessary staff training and time. Many retailers could limit self-service access out of concern for inadvertent sales in violation of the age restrictions. This proposal would also potentially place enforcement authority on the State to inspect hundreds of retailers, resulting in a large financial cost to taxpayers.

It is also critical to note that governors in other states have vetoed similar legislation, and that CRN is engaged in active federal court litigation against New York, the only state to enact similar legislation. That litigation has progressed to the point that CRN has recently petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of the New York law, reflecting the far-reaching implications of this legislative approach and the serious First Amendment concerns it raises for commercial speech nationwide. S.B. 2774 begs similar constitutional questions to those raised by the New York law and that are the subject of CRN's ongoing litigation over how this legislative approach could violate First Amendment protections on commercial speech. Specifically, this bill, like the New York law, uses protected speech (lawful and truthful claims about a product) as a proxy for supposed harm without any supporting evidence.

CRN is committed to working with the bill sponsor and policymakers in Rhode Island to enhance public health; however, targeting safe, beneficial, and federally regulated products is not a viable solution. The reality is that this legislation will not provide any benefit toward reducing eating disorders among young people and, in fact, creates a false sense of hope that the legislature is doing something to address this issue and help those in need. We urge you to reevaluate this bill, as its extensive impacts will be felt by most of the communities and consumers that you represent and respectfully ask that you oppose S.B. 2774.

We thank you for the opportunity to convey our position and are available to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Meirovitz
Senior Director, Government Relations
Council for Responsible Nutrition