



March 4, 2026

The Honorable John P. Burke, Chairman  
Senate Labor and Gaming Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: S.2498, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Inspection of Personnel Files

Dear Chairman Burke,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition would like to express our opposition to S.2498 – An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Inspection of Personnel Files. This legislation would significantly expand an employer’s obligations under this section having to provide workers or former workers access to personnel files or face higher potential fines for failing to do so in the required time.

While we appreciate the sponsor and proponents’ interest in revising this section of law, we believe this legislation goes too far.

Among the changes proposed in this bill are the following:

- Allows access to more than records pertaining to employment, promotion, compensation, termination, and disciplinary action and provides a far broader definition of what constitutes a personnel record.
- Deletes language that prevents the removal of documents.
- Adds former employees to those who can access files and sets a 3-year period to maintain records.
- Removes the prohibition on records used for certain outlined civil and criminal court proceedings.
- Increases fines of up to \$3,000 per offense.

Again, while we understand there may be a need to update this statute, we are concerned regarding the impact on our state’s businesses, most of whom are small employers with under twenty employees. We believe it is important to recognize the challenges faced by small businesses in our state. Many of these businesses don’t have their own HR departments and are simply looking to provide goods and services to their customers and maintain a vibrant workplace.

For the reasons stated above, we ask the Committee to not take any action on Senate Bill 2498. Thank you for your consideration of our position on this legislation.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

David Chenevert, Chairman, Rhode Island Business Coalition

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

Propane Gas Association of New England

Rhode Island Bankers Association

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association

Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Rhode Island Small Business Summit Tax and Budget Committee

Rhode Island Staffing Association

cc. Senate Labor and Gaming Committee members