



Director's Office

One Capitol Hill | Providence, RI 02908 | (401) 222-2280

Jonathan Womer, Director

March 4, 2026

The Honorable John P. Burke
Chairperson
Senate Committee on Labor & Gaming
Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Re: Senate Bill No. 2502 – An Act Related to Labor and Labor Relations – Workplace Psychological Safety Act

Dear Chairperson Burke,

Thank you for providing the Division of Human Resources (“Division”) within the Department of Administration (“Department”) the opportunity to submit our concerns in response to Senate Bill No. 2502, which proposes new amendments to labor relations law, specifically relating to workplace safety.

The Division is always in support of measures that help protect employees and ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment. Currently, there are many protections and avenues afforded to State employees to address the issues contemplated in the proposed legislation. State employees may file claims for psychological injuries caused by stress under the R.I. Worker’s Compensation Act.

In addition, the R.I. Fair Employment Practices Act, which covers State employees, prohibits employment discrimination. Union contracts may also contain express protections against “discrimination, intimidation, or coercion” and members may seek redress for these violations through the contracts’ grievance and arbitration provisions.

Protection against retaliation is not unique to the proposed legislation. Several state (RI Fair Employment Practices Act; RI Whistleblower Protection Act) and federal statutes (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the Americans with Disabilities Act) all expressly prohibit retaliation against anyone who opposes unlawful employment practices or who supports someone who opposes such violations.

Every State employee who believes and/or claims that they are subjected to the psychological harm addressed by the proposed legislation can avail themselves of significant protections and remedies under existing legal authority.



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This proposed legislation does not provide any new or additional protections for State employees in that the State has already completed the required internal support steps, such as development of policy, staff training and establishment of complaint-investigation procedures. The proposed legislation's requirements for record-keeping and reporting is burdensome and may not advance the goals of this legislation, as the statistics specified indicate nothing germane to psychological abuse.

The Division appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns over this legislation with the Committee. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact my office at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer L. Wilson".

Jennifer L. Wilson
Executive Director
Division of Human Resources

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor & Gaming
The Honorable Frank A. Ciccone III
Kristen Silvia, Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Legislation
Audra Parrillo, Committee Clerk