

2026 -- H 7291

LC003521

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- LABOR RELATIONS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Casey, Edwards, and Ackerman

Date Introduced: January 23, 2026

Referred To: House Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 28-7-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-7 entitled "Labor Relations Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

28-7-14. Exclusive representation of employees.

(a) Representatives designated or selected for the purposes of collective bargaining by the majority of the employees in a unit appropriate for those purposes, or by the majority of the employees voting in an election conducted pursuant to §§ 28-7-15 — 28-7-19, shall be the exclusive representatives of all the employees in the appropriate unit for the purposes of collective bargaining in respect to rates of pay, wages, hours of employment, or other conditions of employment; provided, that employees, directly or through representatives, shall have the right at any time to present grievances to their employer.

(b)(1) Employees not represented by any labor organization for the purposes of collective bargaining may indicate their desire for representation by demonstrating their majority support. To demonstrate majority support, employees may either:

(i) File cards signed by at least thirty percent (30%) of the appropriate unit requesting an election run by the board defined in § 28-7-3, with a majority of employees voting in the election voting for representation; or

(ii) File cards signed by more than fifty percent (50%) of the appropriate unit requesting representation and waiving their right to the election provided in subsection (b)(1)(i) of this section.

(2) If the board receives cards requesting exclusive representation by a labor organization

1 from at least fifty percent (50%) of the appropriate unit, the board shall certify the unit.

2 (c) No agent of the state nor any state or public agency shall encourage or discourage their
3 employees from exercising their rights under this section. All management or administrative
4 personnel shall remain neutral.

5 SECTION 2. Section 36-11-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 36-11 entitled "Organization
6 of State Employees" is hereby amended to read as follows:

7 **36-11-2. Discrimination because of membership in employee organization prohibited.**

8 (a) There shall be no discrimination against any state employee because the employee has
9 formed, joined, or chosen to be represented by any labor or employee organization.

10 (b) Supervisory employees shall not endorse any particular labor or employee organization
11 or by reason of membership in any organization, show prejudice or discriminate against any
12 individual employee.

13 (c) Membership in any labor or employee organization may be determined by each
14 individual employee and each individual member. Membership dues or fees are established in
15 amounts as determined by the organization.

16 (d) The state controller shall hereby be directed, upon certification of the exclusive
17 bargaining organization, to deduct biweekly membership dues from the employee's salary and
18 remit the amount to the treasurer of the exclusive bargaining organization.

19 (e) Any employees in the bargaining unit, who are not members of the exclusive bargaining
20 representative organization, may be required by the labor or employee organization to pay a
21 reasonable charge for grievances and/or arbitrations brought at the nonmember's request.

22 (f) The employer shall notify the exclusive bargaining unit representative organization of
23 the hiring of any employee in the bargaining unit. The notice shall be given promptly after the
24 hiring decision is made but in no event later than the fifth business day following the employee's
25 start date.

26 (g) **Bargaining unit lists.**

27 (1) Once every one hundred twenty (120) days, or on a more frequent basis if mutually
28 agreed to by the employer and the employee organization, the employer shall provide the employee
29 organization that is the exclusive representative of a bargaining unit, and any statewide employee
30 organization, of which the local employee organization is an affiliate, with a list of all employees
31 in that bargaining unit.

32 (2) The list shall include, as appropriate, each employee's employee ID number, first name,
33 last name, work location/department, job title/classification, date of hire, date of birth, demographic
34 information, contact information, and whether the employee has, to the employer's records,

1 authorized dues deduction. As used in this section, “demographic information” includes the
2 employee’s sex and race/ethnicity, to the extent the employer is in possession of such information.
3 As used in this section, “contact information” includes an employee’s home address, mailing
4 address, work email address, personal email address, and home and personal cellular telephone
5 numbers, to the extent that the employer is in possession of such information.

6 (3) To the extent possible, the employee list shall be in alphabetical order by last name and
7 provided as an electronic spreadsheet with one column for each of the data listed in subsection
8 (g)(2) of this section.

9 (4) The list shall be kept confidential by the employer and the employee organization and
10 shall be exempt from copying and inspection under chapter 2 of title 38 (“access to public records”).

11 (h) A representative of the labor organization shall have at least thirty (30) minutes, to meet
12 with all newly hired bargaining unit employees, in person, for the purpose of orienting the
13 employees to the union. Non-union personnel shall absent themselves from the room during this
14 time. The orientation shall occur during the employer’s regularly scheduled new hire orientation.
15 If no such orientation exists, the employer shall provide coverage for all new employees, for at least
16 thirty (30) minutes to attend an orientation in person, to be scheduled by mutual agreement between
17 the employer and the labor organization.

18 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
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1 This act would allow employees, not represented by a union, to create a group to
2 collectively bargain with employers. The employees would need to demonstrate that they have
3 majority support for the creation of a collective bargaining unit by using signed file cards to gauge
4 the level of support they enjoy, as set forth by the act.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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