

2026 -- S 2342 SUBSTITUTE B

LC004473/SUB B

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- RESTRICTIONS ON SELF-SERVICE CHECKOUT STATIONS ACT

Introduced By: Senators Lawson, LaMountain, and Bissaillon

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: Senate Commerce

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 28 of the General Laws entitled "LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS"
2 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 61

4 RESTRICTIONS ON SELF-SERVICE CHECKOUT STATIONS ACT

5 **28-61-1. Short title.**

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Restrictions on Self-Service Checkout
7 Stations Act".

8 **28-61-2. Applicability.**

9 This act shall apply to all grocery stores in this state that offer shoppers the use of self-
10 service checkout stations.

11 **28-61-3. Definitions.**

12 As used in this chapter, the following terms and phrases are defined as follows:

13 (1) "Department" means the department of labor and training.

14 (2) "Groceries" means

15 (i) Any raw or processed food or beverage intended for human consumption except
16 alcoholic beverages and marijuana products; and

17 (ii) Miscellaneous household maintenance items including, but not limited to, laundry
18 detergent and dishwashing soap, when sold by a retailer that also sells food and beverages.

1 (3) “Grocery store” means a business that earns the majority of its gross income from the
2 retail sale of groceries.

3 (4) “Manual checkout station” means a checkout station at which a human operator assists
4 shoppers by scanning, bagging, and accepting payment for purchases.

5 (5) “Retail clerk” means an employee whose primary responsibility is assisting shoppers
6 with scanning, bagging, and receiving payment for purchases.

7 (6) “Retail sale” means the sale of groceries to a shopper for personal use or consumption;
8 provided, such use is not for the purpose of resale.

9 (7) “Self-service checkout” means an automated process that enables shoppers to scan, bag,
10 and pay for their purchases without human assistance.

11 **28-61-4. Restrictions on self-service checkout stations.**

12 (a) Grocery stores with self-service checkout stations shall have a minimum of one manual
13 checkout station in operation for every three (3) self-service checkout stations in operation;
14 provided further, there shall be a minimum of one manual checkout station in operation that is in
15 compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

16 (b) An employee shall be relieved of all other duties when monitoring any self-service
17 checkout station including, but not limited to, operating a manual checkout station.

18 (c) A grocery store shall be exempt from the required staffing ratio during off-peak hours.
19 "Off-peak hours" means the period before 8:00 a.m. and after 8:00 p.m., local time, on any calendar
20 day.

21 (d) A grocery store shall be exempt from the required staffing ratio during a declared state
22 of emergency affecting the geographic area in which the establishment is located or when a severe
23 weather alert is in effect for the geographic area in which the establishment is located, provided
24 that:

25 (1) Active warning. The exemption applies only during the period the severe weather alert
26 is in effect, as issued or extended by the National Weather Service or applicable state or local
27 emergency management authority; and

28 (2) Employee safety. The establishment shall not require any employee to report to work
29 or remain at work in conditions the employee reasonably believes pose an imminent threat to their
30 personal safety due to the severe weather event.

31 **28-61-5. Rulemaking authority.**

32 The department shall have the primary authority to promulgate rules, regulations, and
33 penalties to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

34 **28-61-6. Violations.**

1 (a) A first violation of the provisions of this chapter shall result in a written warning and
2 no other penalty shall be imposed for such first violation.

3 (b) Fines for multiple violations made by the same grocery store at the same location shall
4 be equal to wages for one four (4) hour shift based on the highest wage for hourly retail clerks for
5 each day on which there is a violation; provided that, fines shall not exceed five hundred dollars
6 (\$500) per day.

7 (c) Any employee may file a complaint with the department alleging a violation of this
8 chapter, free from fear of retaliation. Any employee of a grocery store who alleges retaliation by
9 their employer for submitting a complaint alleging violation(s) of this chapter may bring a cause of
10 action in superior court.

11 (d) If a grocery store does not comply with the provisions of this chapter after thirty (30)
12 days of receiving notice of a violation of this chapter, such non-compliance shall be considered an
13 unlawful act punishable in accordance with §§ 6-13.1-2 and 6-13.1-5.

14 (e) A consumer who alleges a violation of this chapter may file a complaint with the
15 department. Retaliation against a consumer who files a complaint alleging violation of this chapter
16 shall constitute an unlawful act punishable in accordance with §§ 6-13.1-2 and 6-13.1-5.

17 **28-61-7. Severability.**

18 If any part, section, or provision of this chapter is found unconstitutional, illegal, or invalid,
19 such a finding will affect only that part, section or provision of this chapter and the remaining parts,
20 sections, or provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

21 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- RESTRICTIONS ON SELF-SERVICE
CHECKOUT STATIONS ACT

1 This act would mandate a minimum ratio of manual checkout stations to self-service
2 checkout stations and limits the workload and additional duties an employer can assign to an
3 employee that monitors self-service checkout stations.

4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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