

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- EMPLOYMENT SECURITY --
BENEFITS

Introduced By: Representatives Furtado, Kislak, Bennett, Casimiro, Kazarian, Donovan,
Alzate, O'Brien, Stewart, and Messier

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: House Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 28-44-16 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-44 entitled
"Employment Security — Benefits" is hereby amended to read as follows:

28-44-16. Labor disputes.

(a) An individual shall ~~not~~ be entitled to benefits if he or she became unemployed because
of a strike or other industrial controversy in the establishment in which he or she was employed.

~~This section shall not apply if it is shown to the satisfaction of the director that the claimant is not
a member of the organization or group responsible for the labor dispute and is not participating in
or financing or in any way directly interested in the labor dispute.~~

(b) Lockouts. ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), an~~ An individual shall be
entitled to benefits if his or her unemployment is the result of his or her employer's withholding of
employment for the purpose of resisting collective bargaining demands or gaining collective
bargaining concessions, ~~unless:~~

~~(1) The claimant's employer is a member of a multi-employer collective bargaining group
and the lockout is in response to a strike at another member of that multi-employer collective
bargaining group; or~~

~~(2) The claimant's employer establishes to the satisfaction of the director that it has offered
to the labor organization representing the claimant an extension of then-existing wages, hours, and
working conditions, including enforceable no-strike and no-lockout prohibitions, for up to three (3)~~

1 ~~days and the lockout is in response to the labor organization's refusal to execute the extension.~~

2 (c) If the unemployment continues more than one week following the conclusion of a labor
3 dispute, an individual who is otherwise eligible under the terms of this chapter shall be entitled to
4 benefits.

5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- EMPLOYMENT SECURITY --
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- 1 This act would allow unemployment benefits for workers who are on strike or are locked
2 out of their workplaces by their employer due to a labor dispute.
3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC004168
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