**Last Week at the State House**

The legislator was on break last week. The filing of bills was extended to March 1st, so expect to see numerous bills in UTD in the upcoming weeks.

**This Week at the State House**

The House has begun to hold hearings in a hybrid form – allowing the public to attend in person, submit written testimony or to sign up to testify virtually. The Senate remains in a virtual testimony only format, meaning the public can provide written testimony or sign up to testify by telephone.

**Tuesday, March 1st**

The **House Corporations Committee will meet at the Rise** (approximately 4:30 p.m.) **H.7231, An Act Relating to Business Professions – Freedom to Travel and Work Act**, allows Rhode Island Occupational Boards to recognize licenses from other states and award Rhode Island licenses to individuals who had a license from another state for one year or more and remains in good standing in that state. To be eligible, the license holder could not have complaints filed against them in the other state, nor could they have surrendered the license. The bill can be viewed at: [H7231.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7231.pdf) Written testimony may be submitted via [HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov) Please include your name, bill number and position in the subject line. The deadline for written testimony is Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. \*DEADLINE: Individuals may testify in person or over the phone. For phone testimony, the deadline to register is 4:00 pm Monday, February 28th . To register, complete the [FORM](https://forms.office.com/g/rXaRyK14CY) or sign-up in person in the House Lounge.

The **House Finance Committee will meet at the Rise in Room 35**. Governor McKee’s **ARPA Fund proposals** for the **Enhanced Real Jobs program, the Blue Economy Program and the Unemployment Trust Fund** will be heard. The Enhanced Real Jobs initiative calls for $15 million to be spent by June 30, 2024 and another $15 million by June 30, 2025. These funds shall support the Real Jobs Rhode Island program in the development of job partnerships, connecting industry employers adversely impacted by the pandemic to individuals enrolled in workforce training programs. The Blue Economy Program proposes to use $40 million by June 30, 2024 and $20 million by June 30, 2025. The Blue Economy Program is focused on areas such as ports and shipping, defense, marine trades, ocean-related technology, ocean-based renewables, aquaculture and fisheries, and tourism and recreation. Finally, the UI line item calls for $30 million to be deposited into the Trust Fund to replenish the fund. The Chamber believes this is not enough. The fraudulent claims alone reportedly took $36 million in employer contributions from the fund. At the last report, the Fund was down about $200 million from the pre-pandemic levels. If your unemployment tax has increased, we strongly urge you to submit testimony at this hearing. Written testimony may be submitted to [HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov) by 1:00 p.m. Tuesday. Indicate your name, bill number and position in the Subject Line of the Email. Individuals may testify in person or over the phone. To testify by phone you must complete the following form by 4:00 p.m. Monday [House Committee on Finance - 3 (office.com)](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZnMUMrI1W6lGqP5le-GGa29URUk5Mk5GQTFJMEhTN1BFUkJCQ1VQVldMSy4u)

The **Senate Judiciary Committee will meet at the Rise** (approximately 4:30 p.m.) and will hear testimony on **S.2124, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Unfair Employment Practices**. The bill prohibits an employer from requiring an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement or non-disparagement agreement, as a condition of employment. The bill can be viewed at: [S2124.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2124.pdf) Written testimony can be submitted to the committee by emailing it to [slegislation@rilegislature.gov](mailto:slegislation@rilegislature.gov) Members of the public can request to provide verbal testimony to the committee through the following link: [VERBAL TESTIMONY](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZrrkHo3ATJRAp4ByeeV8cWRUNjhLV1dDNDVVNVJaRjhUOTlYWFVGS0pGNS4u)  
\*Requests to provide verbal testimony must be submitted by 4:00 PM on Monday,  
February 28 , 2022.

**Wednesday, March 2nd**

The **Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture** will be hosting a presentation by **ISO-NE**, the organization that is responsible for ensuring reliable electricity is available to Rhode Island businesses and homes. The meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m. If you are interested in watching the presentation, this meeting will be streamed live online through Capitol TV [https://rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx)

**Thursday, March 3rd**

The **Senate Committee on Health and Human Services** will meet at 4:00 p.m. to discuss additional health care mandates. S.2325 requires coverage for Covid-19 home test kits; S.2080 requires coverage for 10 categories of “essential health benefits”; and S.2203 requires coverage for treatment of pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections/pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome. The Chamber will request the creation of a Health Care Advisory Council to review all health care benefit mandates to provide cost analysis to the legislature as it deliberates these issues. Written testimony can be submitted to the committee by emailing it to: [slegislation@rilegislature.gov](mailto:slegislation@rilegislature.gov) Members of the public can request to provide verbal testimony to the committee through the following link: [VERBAL TESTIMONY](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZrrkHo3ATJRAp4ByeeV8cWRUNkI1TEVTU0xYVlhNWDJFMllLM0RSQ1g0Ny4u) \*Requests to provide verbal testimony must be submitted by 4:00 PM on Wednesday,  
March 2, 2022.