**Unemployment Trust Fund Call to Action**

The Chamber needs your help! As the discussions continue over how to spend roughly $2 billion, there seems to still be some question as to whether the Unemployment Trust Fund will be partially replenished after the pandemic took its toll on the fund. The most updated information, resulting from the first quarter tax returns, reveals that the fund has approximately $273 million in it at this time. Remember that the fund had $500 million in it prior to the beginning of the pandemic. Total UI payments for fraudulent claims now stands at $104 million – of which $55 million came from Rhode Island employers. During the pandemic, the unemployment insurance tax increased two schedules – from F to H. If the General Assembly votes to add even $100 million to the trust fund, then every Rhode Island business would see a one-schedule tax drop. ***The Chamber is asking you to call or contact your State Representative and State Senator this week.*** Ask them to support full replenishment of the fund, or support adding enough money to the trust fund to lower the unemployment insurance tax schedule AND to convey that support to the leadership. Thank you for taking action!

**Last Week at the State House**

The legalization of the adult use of marijuana was signed into law May 25th. It will take a little time for the regulations to be developed and adopted, but employers should review the statutes and to consider whether employee handbooks require updating. Both bills were signed by the Governor (they are identical). The bills can be viewed in their entirety at:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7593A.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2430A.pdf>

The Senate Judiciary Committee passed S.2775, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Payment of Wages. The bill was not amended by the committee in any way. S.2775 was introduced at the request of the Attorney General, and it designates failure to pay wages on time, failure to pay wages at time of termination, or misclassification of employees as independent contractors, as felonies subject to a prison sentence. The full senate will vote on the bill Thursday, June 2nd.

The House Judiciary Committee passed H.7895, An Act Relating to Courts and Civil Procedures – Rhode Island Commercial Receivership Act, and the full house is scheduled to vote on the bill June 1st. This act would create a temporary non-liquidating receivership program for businesses that have had a substantial decline in revenue after an emergency declaration by the government or for businesses that have suspended or ceased a substantial part of their operations because of action by a governmental unit exercising its police or regulatory powers to address an emergency. The bill can be viewed at: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7895.pdf>

**This Week at the State House**

**Tuesday, May 31**

The Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government is meeting at the Rise in room 211. The one bill scheduled for a vote is S.2345, An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Parking Facilities and Privileges. Unless a SubA is posted prior to the vote, this bill requires all large parking lots (with a few exceptions) to include designated spots designed for persons transporting young children, under the age of three, and baby strollers. Lots with 101-500 spots must designate two spots; lots with 501-1000 spots must designate three spots; and lots with more than 100 spots must add one additional spot for each 500 parking spaces over 1000. Exemptions to this rule include single-family homes, duplexes, multifamily residences and industrial zoned properties. The bill contains specifications for the dimensions of the spots as well as the location. Property owners have two years from the date of enactment to comply. The bill can be viewed at: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2345.pdf>

The House Finance Committee is meting at the Rise in room 35. The committee will be voting on H.7863, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Employment Security. H.7863 extends until June 30, 2023, an increase in the total amount of earnings a partial-unemployment insurance claimant can receive before being entirely disqualified for unemployment insurance benefits and increases the amount of earnings disregarded when calculating a weekly benefit rate. Without passage of this bill, these benefits (which were changed during the pandemic) end on June 30, 2022.

**Wednesday, June 1**

The House Labor Committee will vote on S.2418, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Employment of Women and Children. This bill is identical to H.6652 which is scheduled for a vote on the House floor the same day. The bill requires children who are 14 years of age and wish to work, to complete a three-hour training program with the Department of Labor and Training. The program, consisting of workplace health and safety content as well as workers’ compensation rights and workers’ rights, must be completed before a limited work permit can be issued to the child.

The following new bills were filled last week:

House Bill No. [8282](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8282.pdf) Kislak, Potter, Slater, Diaz, Cassar, Bennett, Caldwell, Craven, Morales, Williams**,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES (Requires health insurers, nonprofit hospital service corporations, nonprofit medical service corporations, health maintenance organizations and Rhode Island Medicaid, to issue policies that provide coverage for emergency medical services transport.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8282.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2984](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2984.pdf) Goodwin, Bell**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- HOUSING MAINTENANCE AND OCCUPANCY CODE (Allows a municipality to impose a debt in favor of the corporate unit against the owner when the municipality relocates the occupant and authorizes the corporate unit to choose the vendors to assist qualifying homeowners with repair costs.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2984.pdf>