**Call To Action – Make Your Voices Heard**

Local leaders are considering legislation that will raise income taxes on what is considered by some to be “high income earners.”  If adopted, this legislation would effectively establish a new tax on some small business owners in Rhode Island.  Most small businesses are organized as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or S-corporations.  In these cases, small business owners file their income taxes as individuals.  In a state like Rhode Island, where most businesses are small, the majority of the taxpayers directly impacted by this legislation will be small business owners.  It is also worth noting that small businesses in Rhode Island create over two-thirds of the new jobs in our state every year. Thus, this proposal would discourage job and economic growth. Please take a few minutes to go to the following link and add your story to this debate: <https://www.votervoice.net/RIBC/campaigns/85638/respond> An email will be sent to your State Representative and that could make all the difference on this issue.

**This Week At The State House**

**Federal Response Funds Update** – The Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to meet Tuesday at the Rise (approximately 5:00 pm) to receive a briefing on the Federal CARES Act funding and the American Rescue Plan Act funds and allowable uses/guidance. The House Finance Committee will hold a similar briefing Thursday at the Rise (approximately 5:00 pm). Both hearings will be broadcast on Capitol TV <http://rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx> The federal guidance will provide Rhode Island with the boundaries for the stimulus budget that is expected to be addressed in September.

**Family Leave Vote** – The Senate Labor Committee is scheduled to vote Wednesday at 3:00 pm on S.611, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations- Rhode Island Family and Parental Leave Act. S.611 increases, from 13 to 26, the number of consecutive weeks over a two-year period an employee can take as unpaid leave to care for a family member. To qualify, the employee is required to have worked for the same employer for 12 months, and must provide 30 days notice of the intended date of the start of the leave, unless the notice cannot be provided due to a medical emergency. The following members are on the Senate Labor Committee: Chairman Frank Ciccone, Senator Frank Lombardi, Senator John Burke, Senator Jessica de la Cruz, Senator Gayle Goldin, Senator Frank Lombardo, Senator Roger Picard and Senator Susan Sosnowski. If the passage of this bill will hurt your business, please contact the committee members before the Wednesday vote.

**Workers’ Compensation Changes** – The Senate Labor Committee will also hear testimony Wednesday on S.937, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Workers Compensation Benefits. The bill changes the calculations for permanent total disability benefits starting January 1, 2022 from 75% of the employee’s average weekly spendable base wages, to 62% of the employee’s average weekly base wages. The bill uses this same formula for individuals that return to work and suffers a recurrence of the injury. Lastly, the bill requires benefits to be paid within 14 days of the court order date or a penalty of $100 per day of delinquency will be assessed.

The following new bills have been filed:

House Bill No. [6370](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6370.pdf)  Slater, O'Brien, Amore, Solomon, Kazarian, Alzate, Hull, Potter, Morales, Giraldo**,**AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- ADULT USE MARIJUANA (Authorizes the director of the department of business regulation to license the cultivation and sale of marijuana.) [H6370.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6370.pdf)

House Bill No. [6374](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6374.pdf) (Secretary of State) Casimiro, Noret, McEntee, Ackerman, Alzate, Fenton-Fung, Lima, Potter**,**AN ACT RELATING TO CORPORATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS -- CORPORATIONS - GENERAL PROVISIONS (Allows the secretary of state and tax administrator to promulgate emergency rules and regulations related to filing procedures, minimum corporate taxes, and fees and/or penalties, during a declared state of emergency.) [H6374.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6374.pdf)

House Bill No. [6376](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6376.pdf) Williams**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- WORKERS COMPENSATION -- BENEFITS (Creates a new formula for determining a totally and partially disabled injured workers' weekly benefit entitlement. It also eliminates the current ambiguity in an injured workers' entitlement, when he or she suffers a recurrence of disability.) [H6376.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6376.pdf)

Senate Bill No. [937](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0937.pdf) Ciccone, Lombardi, McCaffrey**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- WORKERS COMPENSATION -- BENEFITS (Creates a new formula for determining a totally and partially disabled injured workers' weekly benefit entitlement. It also eliminates the current ambiguity in an injured workers' entitlement, when he or she suffers a recurrence of disability.) [S0937.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0937.pdf)

Senate Bill No. [938](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0938.pdf)  Miller, McCaffrey, Goodwin**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (Prohibits the sale or offer for sale of any flavored electronic nicotine delivery system.) [S0938.pdf (state.ri.us)](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0938.pdf)