**This Week At The State House**

We are anxiously awaiting the release of the proposed FY2022 budget. It could be released this week or next week. Once the House Finance Committee passes a budget, it must sit on the House floor for seven days before the full House can vote on the bill. Please watch for emails from the Chamber as this process moves forward. We may ask you to quickly contact your legislators. Stay tuned!

**Workplace Bullying and Nondisclosure/Non-disparage Agreements**

On **Wednesday at 4:00pm, the House Labor Committee** will take testimony on **H.6352, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Dignity at Work**. This legislation would place employers in an extremely difficult position and would result in many lawsuits. The definition of “workplace bullying” under this bill includes actions that “undermine” “humiliate” or “sabotage a person in the workplace.” It is characterized as taking the form of “interpersonal interactions” or “management actions” and even goes as far as to include “other types of objectionable behaviors.” These terms are very subjective. They can mean different things to different people, leaving everyone wondering what they can and cannot do or say in the workplace. Page 4 of the bill talks about specific actions that are considered bullying: offensive language, interfering with a person’s personal property, overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision, withholding information, changing work arrangements to deliberately inconvenience someone, intruding on a person’s privacy by pestering, spreading misinformation, ignoring someone, reminding a person of past mistakes, gossiping… There is no way an employer can monitor all of these potential activities, and unfortunately many of these items cannot really be defined. It is easy to anticipate situations where two employees will accuse each other of bullying and both will be correct under this broad statute.

Written testimony may be submitted via [**HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov**](mailto:HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov) **Indicate your name, bill number, and viewpoint (for/against/neither) at top of message.** DEADLINE: Written testimony should be submitted no later than Wednesday at 1:00 pm. **It is recommended that testimony be submitted as a PDF file.**  **VERBAL TESTIMONY** **\*DEADLINE: Requests for verbal testimony must be submitted via the link, by 4:00 PM** **on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.** For verbal testimony requests, [CLICK HERE](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZpR-enp9FkxEjcJIbBjmg-tUQlhFNjZEWFJRWlAxWTI5UEZJUlhOVUdSRS4u)

**H.5853, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Fair Employment Practices**, is scheduled for a vote in the House Labor Committee as well. A SubA may be forthcoming, but it has not been posted as of the time “Under the Dome” was written. H.5853 forbids an employer from requiring an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement or non-disparagement agreement regarding alleged violations of civil rights or criminal conduct as a condition of employment or as a condition of continuing employment. The chamber voiced opposition to this bill at the hearing earlier this year, as it has the potential to stifle settlement agreements which are beneficial to both parties.

The following new bills have been filed:

House Bill No. [6383](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6383.pdf) Alzate**,**AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT (Requires the department of environmental management to create environmental justice areas.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6383.pdf>

House Bill No. [6393](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6393.pdf) Bennett, McLaughlin, Lombardi, Chippendale, Potter, Lima, Alzate, Hull, Edwards, Barros**,**AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS - CORROSION PREVENTION AND MITIGATION WORK REQUIREMENTS (Requires all contractors and subcontractors who perform construction, alteration, demolition, installation, repair or maintenance work, pursuant to public works contracts, to comply with industry standards for infrastructure corrosion prevention.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6393.pdf>

House Bill No. [6396](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6396.pdf) Tanzi, Cortvriend, Williams, Ranglin-Vassell, Carson, Henries, Ruggiero, Abney, Felix, Alzate**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- TOBACCO PRODUCT SALES' RESTRICTIONS (Prohibits the sale of certain flavored tobacco products and electronic nicotine delivery systems.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6396.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [947](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0947.pdf) Burke, Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- MINIMUM WAGES (Repeals § 28-12-9 of the general laws which provides that the director of labor and training may approve of wages below the minimum wage for those persons whose earning capacity is impaired due to physical or mental disability.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0947.pdf>