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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 23-H 5371, AN ACT RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGES March 29, 2023

The ACLU of Rhode Island fully supports this legislation, which would remove the current exemption in the state’s minimum wage law for people engaged in so-called “domestic service.”

It is unfortunate that the state’s labor laws contain a variety of exemptions, including this one, for domestic workers. People who engage in the domestic work that is devoid of wage protections are composed largely of women, people of color, and immigrants – many of them falling into all three categories. Thus, the discriminatory nature of the exemption – in effect, if not intent – is abundantly clear.

At the present time, domestic workers are similarly exempted from such key labor laws as the Fair Employment Practices Act and the statute banning sex discrimination in wages. It is past time for these unfair and discriminatory exemptions to end. We therefore strongly urge passage of this legislation.