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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 24-H 7532, AN ACT RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGES March 27, 2024

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. The class of people who engage in the domestic work that is devoid of wage protections are largely composed 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 also unfairly exempted from other key labor laws, including the Fair Employment Practices Act and the statute banning sex discrimination in wages. It is past time for these discriminatory exemptions to end. We therefore strongly urge passage of this legislation as a key first step towards accomplishing that goal.