

Final 2025 Legislative Wrap-up, Or Is It?

The legislature finished its work at 1:30 am June 21, 2025. Since then, the General Assembly has transmitted bills to the Governor for his consideration. That process was completed last Friday. As you know, the federal government passed legislation affecting state programs, with some changes coming in future years. A team in Rhode Island is reviewing the large bill to determine the changes to state revenue. If the Rhode Island budget must be amended as a result of the passage of the federal law, the legislature will return for a fall session. In the event a session is called to order, all legislation that has not passed. to date, is technically alive and can be addressed. Past legislatures have limited voting to the issue or issues causing the General Assembly to reconvene, but it is not a rule.

The Government Affairs Committee was very engaged: reviewing over 2000 bills, actively tracking over 100 pieces of legislation, and providing testimony on many of them verbally or in writing. Next year is an election year. If you want to be at the table instead of “on the menu,” we encourage you to think about running for office.

RIMBA Bills By Category:

2- Strongly Oppose – 13 bills, none passed – 100% success rate

3 – Oppose – 38 bills, 6 passed, with one amended to address the issue – 84% success rate

Captive Audience Ban – H.5506 SubA/S.126 SubA – Public Law Chapters 419 and 420 - limit the First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment rights of employers by barring them from holding mandatory meetings with employees to discuss any issue covered under the bill’s definition of “political matters.” “Political matters” is defined as, “topics that are unrelated to the employer's business or business activities, such as subjects relating to elections for political office, political parties, proposals to change legislation or regulations which are not directly related to the employer's business, and a decision whether to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or labor organization.” It is this very situation that was anticipated, and addressed by Congress under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. That federal law specifically allows employers to hold such meetings provided they do not threaten employees in the meeting. The new state law does allow employers to: (1) communicate to its employees any information that the employer is required by law to communicate, but only to the extent of such legal requirement, (2) communicate to its employees any information that is necessary to perform their job duties, (3) communicate with employees of higher education entities if it is part of coursework, symposia or an academic program at such institution, (4) engage in casual conversations with employees if participation is not required. The law is in effect now. The link to the Public Law is not yet available. The final version of the bill can be viewed at: <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5506A.pdf>

The Non-Owner Occupied Property Tax - H.5752/S.437, Acts Relating to Taxation - imposed a property tax on non-owner occupied residential properties worth \$1 million or more. While these bills did not pass, similar language was included in the FY2026 budget. Some media outlets have dubbed this the “Taylor Swift” tax. The language defines “non-owner occupied as “the residential property does not serve as the owner’s primary residence and is not occupied by the owner of the property for a majority of days during a given taxable year.” If the property has an assessed at a value over \$1 million, and the property is not rented for more than 183 days during the previous taxable year or was subject to the room reseller tax, or lodgings tax, it falls under the new tax. The tax amounts to \$2.50 for each \$500 of assessed value in excess of \$1 million. The tax is levied in addition to all other taxes assessed. The tax can be paid in four quarterly payments, with the first installment due September 15th of a given taxable year.

Employer “Mini-Handbook” Requirement - H.5679 SubAaa/S.70 SubAaa – Public Law Chapters 337 and 338 - changes an employer’s responsibilities, starting January 1, 2026, as it relates to providing a type of “mini employee handbook” (in English) to employees when they are hired. The information must include: rate or rates of pay and the basis for pay (hour, shift, day, week, salary, piece, commission, or other method), allowances, if any, for meals and lodging; employer's policy on sick, vacation, personal leave, holidays and hours; employee's employment status and whether the employee is exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime; a list of deductions that may be made from the employee's pay; number of days in the pay period, the regularly scheduled payday, and the payday on which the employee will receive the first payment of wages earned; legal name of the employer and the operating name of the employer, if different from its legal name; physical address of the employer's main office or principal place of business, and its mailing address if different; and telephone number of the employer. Failure to comply results in a penalty of \$400 for the first and second offense. Subsequent offenses are subject to the penalties in RIGL 28-14-17(a) which reads, “guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction of the misdemeanor, the employer shall be punished by a fine of not less than four hundred dollars (\$400) for each separate offense, or by imprisonment of up to one year, or by both fine and imprisonment.” The link to the Public Law is not yet available. The final version of the bill can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5679Aaa.pdf>

4 – Amend – 5 bills – 2 passed after RIMBA withdrew objection – 100% success rate

Notice of Security Breach – H.5415 SubA/S.603 SubA – Public Law Chapters 424 and 425 - require licensees to notify the director of the Department of Business Regulation (DBR) or the director’s designee no later than three (3) business days from a determination that a security event has occurred. The law defines a “security event” as “an event resulting in unauthorized access to, or disruption or misuse of, an information system or information stored on such information system, or customer information held in physical form...” RIMBA raised concerns regarding the short three-day requirement. DBR clarified that the requirement is a simple notification that the event has occurred. Additional information about the scope and details of the event must be submitted at a later date, to be determined on a case by case basis as DBR

works with the particular licensee. The link to the Public Law is not yet available. The final version of the bill can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5415A.pdf>

5 – Support – 22 bills – 2 passed – 9% success rate

Unfair Service Agreements – H.5185 SubA/S.133 SubA – Public Law Chapters 53 and 54 - prohibits the use of service agreements that are unfair to an owner of residential real estate who enters into such an agreement or to persons who may become owners of that real estate in the future. The act would also prohibit the recording of such agreements so that the public records will not be clouded by them, and future owners will not be put to the burden of bringing suits to remove them from their chains of title and provides remedies for owners who are inconvenienced or damaged by the recording of such agreements. The new law became effective June 13, 2025.

The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25053.htm>

6 – Strongly Support – 2 bills – 2 passed – 100% success rate

Conflict of Interest – H.5811/S.936 – Public Law Chapters 185 and 186 - prohibit an individual who is licensed as both a Rhode Island real estate agent and mortgage loan originator to be compensated for both the sale of the property and the origination or referral of the loan in securing the property. The law became effective June 24, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at: <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25185.htm>

7 – Neutral Track – 8 bills – 2 passed

H.6043 SubA/S.936 SubA – Public Law Chapters 181 and 182 - make certain technical amendments/clarifications to the statutes relating to the assessment of real property and the timing and process to appeals. This act became effective June 24, 2025; provided, however, the provisions thereof would apply to tax year 2026 (i.e. valuations as of December 31, 2025) and thereafter. This act does not apply retroactively to appeals of prior assessments whether pending or filed after enactment. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25181.htm>

8 – Neutral but Watch – 44 bills – 17 passed

Condominium Meetings – H.5156 SubA – Public Law Chapter 136 - provides that the “meetings” requirements from § 34-36.1-3.08 be applicable to condominiums created before July 1, 1982, and would permit remote participation in condominium meetings. The law became effective June 24, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25136.htm>

Medical Debt – H.5184 SubA/S.169 SubA – Public Law Chapters 300 and 301 - prohibit credit bureau reporting of a consumer’s medical debt. They further prohibit the filing of an execution and attachment against a consumer’s principal residence for judgments based on medical debt. Lastly, the new law defines medical debt as an obligation of a consumer to pay an amount for the receipt of health care services, products, or devices owed to a healthcare facility or a health care professional. The law becomes effective on January 1, 2026. The Public Law is not available on line at this time. The final version of the legislation is:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5184A.pdf>

Ticket Fees and AirBnB Fees – H.5247 SubAaa/S.17 SubA – require entities advertising live-event tickets or short-term lodging to include all fees associated with the transaction before the consumer consents to purchase. Any violation is subject to the Rhode Island Deceptive Trade Practices Act. The law takes effect January 1, 2026. The original bills applied to all goods for sale. The link to the Public Law is not yet available. The final version of the bill can be viewed at: <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5247Aaa.pdf>

RI Housing – H.5299/S.1053 – Public Law Chapters 124 and 152 - direct RI Housing to work with the department of housing, the infrastructure bank, and other appropriate private and public entities to investigate and determine ways to further assist an incorporated homeowners' association to exercise rights to purchase leased land pursuant to the right of first refusal. The law became effective June 24, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25124.htm>

Condominium Law – H.5585/S.507 – Public Law Chapters 177 and 178 - require associations to provide unit owners within thirty (30) days notice of any increase in the deductible application to the association’s policy ensuring that unit owners will have coverage relating to their responsibility for the master policy deductible application to their unit. The law became effective June 24, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25177.htm>

Condominium Law – H.5586/S.508 – Public Law Chapters 179 and 180 - create a process for condominium associations to give notice to and obtain approval from unit mortgage holders for certain association actions, to wit, by mailing via regular and certified mail to the unit mortgagees written request for approval, and if no response is received within sixty-five (65) days, the request shall be deemed approved. These bills were amended to meet RIMBA’s request. The new law took effect June 24, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25179.htm>

Employer “Mini-Handbook” Requirement - H.5679 SubAaa/S.70 SubAaa – Public Law Chapters 337 and 338 - change an employer’s responsibilities, starting January 1, 2026, as it relates to providing a type of “mini employee handbook” (in English) to employees when they are hired. The information must include: rate or rates of pay and the basis for pay (hour, shift, day, week, salary, piece, commission, or other method), allowances, if any, for meals and lodging; employer's policy on sick, vacation, personal leave, holidays and hours; employee's employment status and whether the employee is exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime; a

list of deductions that may be made from the employee's pay; number of days in the pay period, the regularly scheduled payday, and the payday on which the employee will receive the first payment of wages earned; legal name of the employer and the operating name of the employer, if different from its legal name; physical address of the employer's main office or principal place of business, and its mailing address if different; and telephone number of the employer. Failure to comply results in a penalty of \$400 for the first and second offense. Subsequent offenses are subject to the penalties in RIGL 28-14-17(a) which reads, "guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction of the misdemeanor, the employer shall be punished by a fine of not less than four hundred dollars (\$400) for each separate offense, or by imprisonment of up to one year, or by both fine and imprisonment." The link to the Public Law is not yet available. The final version of the bill can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5679Aaa.pdf>

Virtual Currency Kiosk – H.5121 SubA/S.16 SubA – Public Law Chapters 113 and 114 - establish regulation by the department of business regulation (DBR) over the practices and procedures of virtual currency kiosk operators to prevent fraud related to the use of virtual currency kiosks, by establishing daily transaction limits and the regulating of fees. The new law became effective June 23, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25113.htm>

Housing Land Bank Program – H.5955 SubA/S.122 SubAaa – Public Law Chapters 255 and 275 - establish a program to be operated by the department of housing called the "housing land bank" in furtherance of the goal to create affordable housing in the State of Rhode Island. The housing land bank would have authority to buy, receive, and hold real property for the development of housing. The new law became effective June 27, 2025. The Public Law can be viewed at:

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws/law25/law25255.htm>