



**Testimony in Support of Bill Classifying as Employees Those Who Work in Domestic Service, Qualifying Them to be Paid the Minimum Wage: HB5263**  
**House Committee on Labor**  
**February 24, 2021**

The Economic Progress Institute supports HB5263 which, if enacted, would end the exclusion from the legal definition, in Rhode Island statute, of an “Employee” those individuals who work as domestic workers or who work in or about the homes of other people. There is no compelling reason to maintain this distinction. Indeed, under current law, Rhode Island’s approximately 5,600 domestic workers<sup>1</sup>, who often work long hours, can be subject to low wages and deductions for room and board from already low wages. By classifying these individuals as employees—which is what they are—these individuals would qualify for being paid the state’s minimum wage.

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<sup>1</sup> See Julia Wolfe, Jori Kandra, Lora Engdahl, and Heidi Sherholz, “Domestic workers chartbook: A comprehensive look at the demographics, wages, benefits, and poverty rates of the professionals who care for our family members and clean our homes,” *Economic Policy Institute*, May 14, 2020, <https://www.epi.org/publication/domestic-workers-chartbook-a-comprehensive-look-at-the-demographics-wages-benefits-and-poverty-rates-of-the-professionals-who-care-for-our-family-members-and-clean-our-homes/#table1>.