



February Highlights

In Rhode Island, we can expect hundreds of bills in the coming weeks as the deadline for introduction of bills was extended to February 23rd. The RI House of Representatives Task Force for COVID-19 Vaccine received a briefing on Wednesday, February 17th from Dr. Alexander-Scott.

National Legislation surrounding COVID-19 also continued this month, with efforts for mandated essential workers protections occurring across the country. The White House announced a collaboration between the federal government and pharmacies to support increased access to the vaccine.

National Legislative Updates At A Glance:

- Efforts to mandate premium pay for grocery workers – or essential workers more broadly – continued this week in states and municipalities.
- The momentum for “emergency” ordinances, which take effect immediately, appeared to slow, California Grocers Association (CGA) reports.
- The Maryland state House and Senate held hearings this week on the “Maryland Essential Workers’ Protection Act” (HB 581/SB 486). This bill would mandate a variety of protections for essential workers.
- The reconciliation package marked up by the House Ways and Means Committee pursuant to the budget resolution passed by Congress last week includes language reforming both the multiemployer and single-employer pension systems.
- The House Education & Labor Committee and the House Agriculture Committee passed their portions of the reconciliation package. Both committees included federal feeding program provisions.
- The Recycling Leadership Council released its proposal for improving the United States’ recycling infrastructure last week. The Blueprint for America’s Recycling System outlines a national strategy for improving recycling.
- Last week, the White House announced the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination, a collaboration between the federal government, states/jurisdictions, and pharmacy partners, including those of supermarket companies, to expand access to vaccinations.
- Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and Morgan Griffith (R-VA) reintroduced a bipartisan bill (previously H.R. 8179, now H.R. 841) that would allow CBD and other hemp-derived compounds to be marketed and sold as dietary supplements.

[Click here to learn more about National Legislation.](#)

RI Legislative Updates At A Glance:

- The full Senate is scheduled to vote to approve S.1, an Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Minimum Wages.
- **House Hearings of Note:**
 - H.5266, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Unlawful Employment Practices, allows employees to sue employers and individual employees for “directly or indirectly” committing any act considered to be an unfair employment practice.
 - H.5264, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Workers Compensation – Occupational Diseases, addresses questions of employer liability related to the COVID-19 virus.
 - H.5265, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Payment of Wages, assesses new penalties on employers that fail to maintain an employee’s health care benefits while that employee is out of work under TCI; and for failing to retain the employee’s job or provide a similar job to that employee once he/she returns to work.
- **Senate Hearings of Note:**
Senate Bill No. [143](#) Ciccone, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS --MINIMUM WAGES, Provides increases to the minimum wage in 2021, 2022, and 2023 and implements a permanent formula to provide annual adjustments to the minimum wage thereafter.
- **Make a Note - Bills that Impact the Food Industry!**

• House Bill No. 5445	• House Bill No. 5246
• House Bill No. 5448	• House Bill No. 5261
• House Bill No. 5473	• House Bill No. 5264
• House Bill No. 5585	• House Bill No. 5266
• Senate Bill No. 189	• House Bill No. 5280

- House Bill No. [5231](#)
- Senate Bill No. [196](#)

- House Bill No. [5358](#)

[Click here to learn more about Rhode Island Legislation.](#)



Image Source: [Your Thought Partner](#)

Guiding Your Team - The Key for Successful Leadership

During the hustle and bustle of running a business, day-to-day operations can often cloud the bigger picture. As a leader, you must take the time to establish clear expectations for your employees.

How do you start? That's simple, with communication. Make a commitment to share with your team what they can expect from you within each facet of your operations and share where or how their collaboration is needed.

Outlining job roles in great detail and setting clear goals will increase productivity tremendously! For more tips on defining expectations, read [5 Must Do Steps to Share Expectations with Your Team.](#)



Image Source: [HR Dive](#)

Gender Stereotypes Impact on Sexual Harassment Cases

According to a recent study published by the **American Psychological Association's Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, women who do not conform to societal stereotypes of femininity may experience bias when seeking legal protections against harassment. Researchers found that when victims do not fit a prototypical image, sexual harassment may go unrecognized, may not be considered harmful, or may not be believed.

As industry leaders, it is our responsibility to recognize and combat such biases. The HR Department is often the first line of defense for employees, and as such is critical that within the department sexual harassment claims do not go unanswered.

To learn more about this study, visit [HR Drive](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Are You Compliant with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act? Find out with SBA!



On Thursday, March 11 from 10 AM – 12 PM the Small Business Administration will be hosting a webinar to share everything your small business needs to know about the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. Topics will include:

- Employment relationship
- Business and employees covered by the Act
- Minimum wage requirements

- Overtime fundamentals
- Youth employment provision
- Employer record-keeping obligations

Be aware of your obligations under the act, [register here!](#)

The Business Case for Reducing, Rescuing, and Recycling Food Waste



Join the **Center for EcoTechnology** on **Wednesday, March 10 from 10 AM - 11:30 AM** for a free session focused on creative approaches to reducing, rescuing, and composting wasted food at businesses and institutions, and highlight the corresponding benefits.

Attendees will learn how to establish successful wasted food programs, hear about challenges, solutions, and successes, and leave with a curated list of resources. [Register here!](#)



Image Source: [Real Food Jobs RI](#)

Real Food Jobs RI COVID-19 Safety Training

Join Real Food Jobs RI for a COVID-19 Safety training on March 16th from 10 AM - 11 AM! Participants who complete this training will receive a Certificate of Completion in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health. Participants will learn:

- What the virus is and how it spreads
- How to minimize risk at home and in the workplace
- Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting best practices and procedures
- What to do if you become sick or have been in contact with someone who is sick

All employers, job seekers and individuals looking to learn how to safely work during the pandemic, [register here!](#)

CISA Active Shooter Preparedness Webinar

On Wed, April 7th, from 10 AM - 12 PM, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is hosting a 2-hour Security Webinar to enhance awareness of, and response to, an active shooter incident. [Register here!](#)

Coming Soon - Meetings & Annual Events

February 2021:

- Thurs. Feb. 11th: 1st Q BOD Meeting
- Mon. Feb. 15th: Presidents Day – Office Closed
- Thurs. Feb. 18th: Executive Committee Meeting @ 7:30 AM - PP
- Wed. Feb. 24th: Legislative Committee Meeting (*Bill Filling*)

March 2021:

- Thurs. Mar. 4th: Executive Committee Meeting @ 7:30 AM
- Wed. Mar. 10th: Legislative Committee Meeting
- ***POSTPONED Thurs. Mar. 25th; RIFDA Trade Day (Best Bagger, Food Demos, Networking Reception, Industry Dinner) @ Kirkbrae Country Club, Lincoln RI -Rescheduled for Thurs. Sept. 30th***

April 2021:

- Wed. - April 7th: Legislative Committee Meeting @ 8 AM
- Thurs. – Fri. April 15th & 16th: 2021 Convention Sponsorship Program Sent ??
- Thurs. April 15th @ 9:30 AM: Potential WIC/SNAP Meeting??
- Mon. – Tues. April 19th & 20th: 2020 Convention Invitations Sent
- Thurs. April 22nd: Executive Committee Meeting @ 7:30



Thank you to our February Supplier of the Month - Polar

Crafting premium seltzers, mixers, dry sodas in the heart of New England for nearly 140 years.

Retailer of the Month - Stop & Shop



Stop&Shop®

For nearly 100 years, Stop & Shop has been making a difference in customer's lives. Find valuable savings and quality products at your local store.



**If you are a Satisfied Member,
Spread the Word, Tell Your
Industry Friends & Vendors.**

As a member, the benefit advantages such as our food safety renewal classes, WIC/EBT updates, legislative representation and updates, national industry affiliations and updates, networking events, energy programs and food industry camaraderie, as well as a number of other initiatives make RIFDA a great opportunity for new members.

Throughout each year there are exciting events as well as sponsorship and advertising opportunities. It is members like yourselves that make this all happen.

With new memberships RIFDA moves into the future as a stronger and more vibrant representative of the Rhode Island food community.

Learn More



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EcoThermal.org

Marcus Brisco

RollyReceiptsEco@gmail.com ; 937-344-3242

Call: (401) 431-0880 | Fax: (401) 434-2496 | Email: events@rifda.com or sarthurs@rifda.com |
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Rhode Island Food Dealers Association | 450 Veterans Memorial Parkway, Building 8A, East Providence,
RI 02914

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