



Rhode Island – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

11th Edition – 2024

Summary

The latest edition of the Rhode Island CPAC Scorecard assesses 16 votes in the Rhode Island House and 20 votes in the Rhode Island Senate from the 2024 session. Rhode Island Republicans earned an average conservative rating of just 65% which is lower than the Republican average rating for most states, but similar to other states in New England. In 2023 Rhode Island Republicans received an average score of 78%.

The 2024 Rhode Island legislative session was dominated by Leftist overreach, with lawmakers expanding government control over employers, property owners, and even parents. Bills poured taxpayer money into green energy schemes, DEI bureaucracy, and medical debt bailouts while undermining market competition and personal responsibility. Election integrity safeguards were weakened through extended ballot drop box use and loosened mail-in ballot requirements, while Second Amendment rights faced new restrictions. Overall, the session reflected a clear preference for bigger government, more regulation, and Leftist social engineering at the expense of liberty and accountability.

Key Takeaways

Election Integrity Undermined (S 2780, H 7756)

Rhode Island lawmakers expanded early ballot drop box access (**S 2780**) and weakened mail-in ballot security (**H 7756**), both of which open the door for election irregularities. By extending ballot drop box availability by two additional weeks, the legislature made it harder to ensure the chain of custody and integrity of ballots. Additionally, allowing individuals to bypass signing mail-in ballots or applications if they claim illiteracy creates another loophole for abuse. Secure and transparent elections are the cornerstone of democracy, yet Rhode Island has instead chosen to erode safeguards.

Government Intrusion Into Employer-Employee Relationships (S 2436, S 2467, S 2785)

The General Assembly doubled down on inserting itself into the private contracts between employers and employees. **S 2436** voided nearly all noncompete agreements, undermining the right of private parties to freely contract and protect business interests. **S 2467** expanded paid family leave mandates from 13 to 24 weeks, forcing businesses to shoulder significant costs

regardless of financial realities. **S 2785** prohibited employers from disciplining employees who refused to attend workplace meetings on political or religious topics, further micromanaging business policies. Employers—not legislators—should decide the policies that best fit their workplaces, but Rhode Island lawmakers prefer government dictates.

Green Cronyism and Climate Alarmism (S 2043, S 2293, S 2332, S 2499, H 7616)

The session was marked by a flood of climate-related bills that funnel taxpayer dollars into politically favored energy projects. **S 2293** and **H 7616** created the “Renewable Ready Fund” to subsidize renewable development sites, while **S 2499** directed money toward energy storage and infrastructure. **S 2043** embedded climate change rhetoric into long-term economic planning, ensuring bureaucrats prioritize ideology over practical growth. **S 2332** sought additional funding for the climate change bureaucracy, expanding the unelected regulatory state.

Expanding Wage Mandates and Tenant Regulations (H 7532, H 7304)

The legislature broadened minimum wage mandates to include domestic service workers (**H 7532**) and imposed stricter regulations on landlords (**H 7304**). Landlords must now give tenants 60 days’ notice before raising rents, doubling the previous requirement. While framed as “protections,” these policies distort the free market and make it harder for housing and labor markets to function efficiently. Property owners and employers lose flexibility, while renters and workers may face reduced opportunities in the long run.

Highlighted Votes Analyzed

S 2096 Infecting Law Enforcement Disciplinary Policies with DEI.

This bill requires 5-member hearing committees held in response to a complaint against a law enforcement officer to contain at least one individual selected by the Supreme Court’s Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness and the RI Bar Association’s Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. CPAC recognizes that such a provision will be wielded to unjustly persecute law enforcement officers disfavored by the Left and opposed this bill. The House passed this bill on May 9, 2024 by a vote of 58-14 and the bill later became law.

S 2901 Denying Contractors the Ability to Choose Their Health Insurance.

This bill prohibits contractors from paying employees cash in lieu of purchasing healthcare for those employees. CPAC supports pay structures that give people increased control over their health care plans and opposed this bill. The House passed this bill on May 30, 2024 by a vote of 60-7 and the bill later became law.

H 7756 Removing Signature Requirements Relating to Mail-In Ballot and Ballot Applications.

This bill allows people to refrain from signing a mail-in ballot or ballot application if they claim to be unable to read or write. CPAC opposes measures that weaken election integrity and opposed

this bill. The Senate passed this bill on June 11, 2024 by a vote of 36-1 and the bill later became law.

Trends and Observations

Second Amendment Rights Restricted (S 2202)

The legislature passed new gun control measures that increase burdens on lawful gun owners and firearms dealers. **S 2202** prohibits storage of firearms in areas deemed “unsafe,” giving government sweeping power to dictate how citizens may keep arms in their own homes. It also requires rifles and shotguns to be sold with trigger locks, adding yet another barrier to exercising one’s Second Amendment freedoms. These mandates will not deter criminals, who do not follow such regulations, but they do make life harder for law-abiding citizens. Rhode Island lawmakers once again chose symbolism over substance, sacrificing liberty for empty political points.

Weakening Parental Authority in Education (S 2429, S 2843)

Parents’ roles as primary caregivers and moral guides were undermined by multiple bills. **S 2429** would have allowed school employees to claim legal protection for circulating obscene materials to minors, effectively shielding educators from accountability. **S 2843** expanded government-funded pre-K programs, advancing the state’s cradle-to-grave governance strategy that sidelines parents. Conservatives recognize these bills as part of a broader effort to replace parental authority with state control. Protecting children should mean empowering parents, not expanding bureaucratic influence over their upbringing.

Strengthening Rhode Island’s Racial Caste System (H 7057)

Rhode Island continued to prioritize identity politics over fairness by allowing the state government’s Chief Purchasing Officer to waive the state’s bonding requirement for minority and women-owned businesses. The bonding requirement forces businesses to provide a bond to the state that ensures that the business will follow the covenants it has agreed to in its contract. CPAC believes that all people should be equal under the law regardless of race or sex.

Conservative Achievement - House

Patricia Morgan - 80%

Robert Quattrocchi - 80%

Brian J. Rea - 80%

No Rhode Island State Senators received an award for 2024.