



Rhode Island – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

12th Edition – 2025

Summary

The twelfth edition of the Rhode Island CPAC Scorecard assesses 16 votes in the Rhode Island House of Representatives and 17 votes in the Rhode Island Senate from the 2025 session. Rhode Island Republicans earned an average score of **72%** in 2025, up from their 65% average in 2024. Democrats earned an average score of **23%**, reflecting more crossover voting than in prior sessions, though the General Assembly remains firmly aligned with progressive priorities.

The 2025 session was marked by aggressive expansion of gun control, wage mandates, union empowerment, landlord regulation, and taxpayer-funded entitlement growth. Lawmakers banned the sale of commonly owned semiautomatic firearms through **SB 359**, increased the minimum wage through **HB 5029**, expanded payroll tax burdens through **SB 974**, and prohibited landlords from verifying immigration status under **HB 5674**. Election policy also moved in a more permissive direction through **HB 5709**, which expands automatic absentee ballot access. While a handful of pro-market measures such as **SB 1047** and **HB 5575** advanced, the overall trajectory of the session reflected continued growth in state authority over markets, property owners, and civil society.

Key Takeaways

Second Amendment Rights Further Restricted

Through **SB 359**, Rhode Island banned the sale of widely owned semiautomatic firearms, including AR-15 style rifles. The measure represents one of the most sweeping gun restrictions in the country and reinforces Rhode Island's pattern of targeting lawful gun owners rather than criminal misuse.

Wage Mandates and Payroll Taxes Expanded

The General Assembly increased the minimum wage through **HB 5029** and raised the taxable wage base to fund expanded Temporary Caregiver Insurance under **SB 974**. These policies increase labor costs and payroll burdens at a time of economic uncertainty.

Landlord and Property Owner Rights Eroded

With passage of **HB 5674**, landlords may no longer inquire about immigration status, further limiting screening discretion. Combined with expanded tenant and benefit protections, the session continued Rhode Island's pattern of regulatory intervention in private housing markets.

Election Rules Loosened

Through **HB 5709**, lawmakers allowed certain voters to automatically receive absentee ballots for future elections. CPAC opposed this expansion over concerns about ballot security and chain-of-custody safeguards.

Limited Pro-Market Wins

A small number of bills moved in a pro-growth direction. **SB 1047** loosened investment restrictions on insurance companies, and **HB 5575** authorized utilities to procure nuclear energy, signaling modest recognition of market flexibility and energy reliability.

Highlighted Votes Analyzed

SB 359 – Banning the Sale of Assault Weapons

This bill bans the sale of popular semiautomatic firearms in Rhode Island. CPAC believes this measure infringes on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens and opposed this bill. The Senate passed this bill on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 25-11. The House passed this bill on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 44-28. The bill was signed into law.

HB 5029 – Increasing the Minimum Wage

This bill raises the Rhode Island minimum wage to \$16 beginning in 2026 and \$17 beginning in 2027. CPAC believes that these increases will stifle job creation and raise consumer prices and opposed this bill. The House passed this bill on June 12, 2025 by a vote of 56-10. The Senate passed this bill on June 18, 2025 by a vote of 33-4. The bill was signed into law.

SB 974 – Expanding Payroll Taxes for Temporary Caregiver Insurance

This bill increases the taxable wage base for contributions to the Temporary Disability Insurance program to expand caregiver benefits. CPAC believes increasing payroll taxes on Rhode Islanders is fiscally unsound and opposed this bill. The Senate passed this bill on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 34-1. The House passed this bill on June 20, 2025 by a vote of 62-10. The bill was signed into law.

Trends & Observations

Republican Performance Remained Stable

Republicans held steady at 65% in 2025, identical to their 2024 average. Despite being in the minority, Rhode Island Republicans maintained consistent opposition to gun bans, tax increases, and regulatory expansion.

Democratic Crossover Increased but Progressive Governance Dominates

Democrats averaged 23% in 2025, showing more support for limited-government positions than in prior near-zero years. However, the overall legislative direction remains aligned with expanding government mandates and regulatory intervention.

Economic Intervention Continued to Grow

From wage mandates to payroll tax increases to landlord restrictions, Rhode Island continues layering economic controls that shift power from markets to government administrators.

Gun Policy Remains a Central Fault Line

With passage of **SB 359**, Rhode Island reinforced its status as one of the most restrictive states on firearm policy, continuing a multi-year trend of escalating Second Amendment limitations.

Conservative Excellence - House

George Nardone - 93%

Robert Quattrocchi - 92%

Conservative Excellence - Senate

NONE

Conservative Achievement - House

Sherry Roberts - 86%

Conservative Achievement - Senate

Jessica de la Cruz - 81%