



128 DORRANCE STREET, SUITE 400  
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903  
401.831.7171 (t)  
401.831.7175 (f)  
[www.riaclu.org](http://www.riaclu.org) | [info@riaclu.org](mailto:info@riaclu.org)

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF  
18-H 8264, H-8275, H-8276, H-8277, H-8278, H-8279, H-8280 and H-8281  
RELATING TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

June 7, 2018

The ACLU of RI strongly supports this package of legislation emanating from Rep. Tanzi's commission to study sexual harassment in the workplace. We commend the bill sponsors and the Speaker for recognizing the need to address this very critical issue. As revelations in recent months across the country and across numerous professions have made so very clear, workplace sexual harassment is a deep-rooted and serious problem.

The changes to current laws made by these bills are modest but important. By extending the current very short statute of limitations for filing formal complaints of workplace discrimination, adding new reporting requirements for state agencies so the extent of any problems can be better assessed, and addressing the deeply troubling practice of mandated non-disparagement agreements in employment contracts, these bills will be extremely useful to discrimination victims and the public without imposing undue or unfair burdens on employers.

We also urge favorable treatment by the committee of legislation that was introduced earlier in the session – H-7888 and H-8022 by Reps. Tanzi and Edwards, respectively. It would address a recent RI Supreme Court decision and make clear that employees, as well as employers, can be liable for discrimination in the workplace. This bill should be part of any package passed out of this committee in addressing this issue.

From the ACLU's perspective, there is still more to be done. For example, due to restrictions imposed by recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, this package does not address the problem of mandatory arbitration agreements in employment contracts, and we know that various other compromises were made in finalizing this package. Having said that, we once

against urge the committee to approve this important package of legislation so that Rhode Island can proudly proclaim #MeToo to the rest of the country.