



Rhode Island State Council Society for Human Resource Management

Press Release

Press Contact:

Cindy Butler, SPHR, Government Affairs Director:
403-423-0046; 401-338-7252 Cbutler579@aol.com

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Representative Deborah Ruggiero to Receive Outstanding Public Servant Award

(Providence, RI – 3/28/2011) The RI State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) will present their 2011 Outstanding Public Servant Award to Representative Deborah Ruggiero on April 6, 2011 at their annual “Lunch with our Legislators” at the Providence Marriott. This award acknowledges the remarkable contributions of Representative Ruggiero for advocating for legislation that affects positive changes in the workplace and promoting open and transparent government.

The RISC SHRM Outstanding Public Service Award recognizes the contributions of a public servant who has promoted, sponsored, or initiated beneficial workplace legislation and has an awareness of the value of human resource professionals’ involvement in the legislative process. In 2009, as a freshman representative, Ruggiero assumed a lead role opposing bill [\(2009-H 5983A\)](#) that proposed to eliminate the Office of the RI Health Insurance Commissioner in the state budget. Created in 2004, the OHIC is an agency that was established to protect consumers, encourage fair treatment for medical service providers, ensure the solvency of health insurers and improve the health care system’s quality, accessibility and affordability. As the only watchdog agency in the state overseeing the insurers, the OHIC plays a critical role and is an invaluable resource for employers and employees, ensuring transparency in the rate increase process and promoting dialogue with all stakeholders. RI SHRM joined a business coalition to retain the OHIC and Representative Ruggiero presented an amendment to reinstate the office. Ultimately legislative leaders agreed to do so in a budget amendment.

During her tenure as State Representative, Ruggiero has been a champion for small business, economic development and job growth in the state and has sponsored legislation in support of business, recognizing the challenges HR professionals face in hiring and retaining a qualified workforce. Ruggiero’s initiatives include sponsoring legislation for open government and transparency to put General Assembly votes on line [\(2010-H 7202\)](#), urging Health Insurance Commissioner Koller to reject Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI’s application for a rate increase for small and large group plans and sponsoring H. Bill 5184 which would allow employers to pay employee’s wages on a bi-weekly or semi-monthly basis.

RI SHRM’s Government Affairs Director, Cindy Butler stated, ***“Representative Ruggiero is a true advocate for business; she has encouraged Human Resource’s involvement in shaping public policy. It is refreshing to have a legislator that welcomes our opinion and is responsive to acting on key issues that are facing RI employers in this difficult business climate, including those impacted by healthcare reform. We are truly pleased to honor her with our 2011 Outstanding Public Servant Award.”***

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the leading voice of the human resource profession with over 250,000 members worldwide. RI State Council SHRM is a Rhode Island non-profit corporation. The Council and the SHRM-affiliate chapters in RI – the Human Resource Management Association of RI and the Southern RI Human Resource Council – are comprised of over 700 HR professionals in the state. Visit SHRM online at www.shrm.org. For more information on the RI State Council of SHRM access <http://ri.shrm.org>.