

Hello,

My name is Cassidy Bissitt of Smithfield, RI and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 5721.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has created a public health emergency, both in the United States and here in Rhode Island. Workers in essential industries are putting their lives at great risk to keep those who are ill from dying and to maintain the function of our economy and society. HB #5721 provides these workers much deserved and long overdue additional compensation for their labor and for the risk they take on as a result of it.

As a daughter of two healthcare professionals; one of whom works in the Medical Intensive Care Unit at Rhode Island Hospital, I see how healthcare workers are putting their lives at risk everyday to provide the utmost care for their patients. These healthcare professionals are facing an insurmountable amount of mental trauma in addition to their physical strain from the efforts they put into their patients everyday. My mom has talked to me about how she is doing everything in her power to restore her patients' health knowing there is still no cure for COVID-19, and likely no hope for her critically ill patients.

This constant cycle of hopelessness and bearing the trauma of witnessing so many deaths first hand is just one of the many reasons why essential workers, especially nurses, should be provided with hazard pay. Hazard pay would provide some relief to the stress my parents and other essential workers feel for risking their lives everyday.

In conclusion, I ask you to support HB 5721. It is the right thing to do for our fellow citizens in Rhode Island.

Thank you.

Cassidy Bissitt