



## **Testimony in Support**

### **An Act Relating To State Affairs And Government -- Health Care For Children And Pregnant Women**

***April 24, 2025***

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H5205, which would ensure continuous Medicaid coverage for children in Rhode Island through their third birthday. On behalf of the Latino Policy Institute (LPI), we urge your support of this critical legislation that will strengthen early childhood health equity and stability for our state's most vulnerable families.

Latino children make up a significant and growing portion of Rhode Island's child population, and more than half of all Latino children under age five are covered by Medicaid (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT; UnidosUS). Consistent access to health care during a child's earliest years is not only a public health imperative but also a matter of racial and economic justice (UnidosUS).

Routine screenings, early intervention services, and timely treatment of common illnesses are essential during the first three years of life, a period marked by rapid brain and body development. However, many families—especially families of color—face coverage disruptions due to administrative hurdles during annual redetermination processes. These disruptions can lead to missed appointments, delayed care, and unnecessary financial and emotional strain (Kaiser Family Foundation).

We applaud the General Assembly's attention to this issue and highlight that continuous eligibility will reduce unnecessary "churn," improve health outcomes, and promote more efficient use of state resources. Moreover, this legislation aligns Rhode Island with a growing number of states leading with a family-centered, equity-driven approach to health policy.

By investing in continuous coverage for children up to age three, Rhode Island can close gaps in access, support early childhood development, and demonstrate a commitment to health equity.

We respectfully urge you to support H5205 and help make stable, high-quality healthcare a reality for all Rhode Island children.

Sincerely,

Awilda Reinoso Lopez  
Senior Policy & Research Manager  
Latino Policy Institute