



Chair Abney
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Re: Support of the Family Home Visiting bill H-6073

Dear Chair Abney and members of the Committee:

Connecting for Children and Families (CCF) writes today in strong support of Rep. Giraldo's Home Visiting bill H6073 and urges you to ensure that Rhode Island adequately funds the state's home visiting programs.

CCF serves Woonsocket and Northern Rhode Island by providing family-centered programs and educational opportunities that empower children, families, and individuals to thrive and succeed. Yearly, we serve more than 7,000 children and families across four main program areas: Early Learning, Out of School Time, Workforce Development, and Family Strengthening.

As required in H6073, Rhode Island must meet the state funding matching requirements for the federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds so that high-quality home visiting programs are offered to all families who could benefit.

In FY25, Rhode Island was one of only 3 states that did not spend the required amount to draw down the full amount. **For FFY26, Rhode Island must make the \$355,374 investment required to receive \$1.6 million to fund these vital programs.** This relatively small investment is currently absent from the Governor's proposed FY26 budget and we do not think RIDOH currently has the funds to meet the match. We urge you to pass H6073 and add the \$355,0374 into the RIDOH budget to ensure we can meet the federal match.

We also support the increased reporting requirements included in H6073, as they will empower the general assembly to help ensure the ongoing sustainability of these proven and essential programs for families.

Ever since the state's family home visiting services programs were transitioned to a fee-for-service model in October 2023, CCF struggled to maintain our program in a fiscally responsible manner. With the majority of our home visiting families being Medicaid eligible, we were unable to draw down the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant funding we had been awarded. We were instead required to bill to Medicaid; this process—for which we used the free Provider Electronic Solutions (PES) software—proved excruciatingly labor intensive and overburdened our small Finance Department. What's more, **the Medicaid reimbursement rate was insufficient to cover the program's operational costs.** So, after months of trying to make the system work, and consulting with RIDOH and other providers going through the process, we finally had to make the heart wrenching decision to put our Parents as Teachers program on

indefinite hiatus. As a result, **some 90 families, just coming into their own with the help of our home visiting staff, were no longer able to receive the same levels of high-quality and evidence-based supports that had been empowering them to grow their young families with compassion and confidence.**

Rhode Island must protect its young families and consider alternative funding models that have proven successful in other states. Family Home Visiting must continue and even expand to include more families who could benefit from this work.

Please support Home Visiting bill H6073. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at espaulding@ccfcenter.org or 401-766-3384.

Thank you in advance,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Erin Spaulding".

Erin Spaulding
Executive Director