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Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I offer this testimony on behalf of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty in support of H5529 to help low-income seniors to better afford health care.

Among the highest principles of all religious traditions is the duty to care for the elderly. In Christian tradition, we see this in the commandment to “honor your father and mother” (Exodus 20:12). We see it in the Psalms, when they declare, “Do not cast me off in old age; when my strength fails, do not forsake me!” (Psalms 71:9). Yet, low-income Rhode Island seniors are being cast off as they struggle to afford appropriate healthcare.

H5529 expands eligibility for the qualified Medicare beneficiary program by increasing the income eligibility from \$1,781 to \$2,445 per month. This would help many lower income seniors and people with disabilities to afford healthcare. The saving of at least \$185 a month for thousands of people would also help them to pay for other basics needs such as food, housing, and utilities. The bill also helps those with very low income by covering co-pays and deductibles and removing restrictive asset limits.

Please join with me in standing up for low-income older adults and adults with disabilities by not forsaking those most in need.

Respectfully submitted,
Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser