



SEIUHealthcare.
United for Quality Care

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Subject: Testimony in Support of H-5988 – Strengthening Access to Pediatric Care for Rhode Island’s Families

Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, which represents more than 7,000 healthcare and service workers across Rhode Island—including family childcare providers, homecare workers, and clinic workers who care for thousands of Rhode Island children—we are proud to submit this letter in strong support of **H-5988**.

Our members see it every day: parents struggling to find a pediatrician for their child. Families waiting months for a basic appointment. Children missing out on regular check-ups, vaccines, and early interventions that could prevent serious health issues later on.

When families can’t find a pediatrician, they are forced to turn to emergency rooms for care that should happen in a regular doctor’s office. We see the frustration, the fear, and the hardship it places on parents and caregivers alike.

The reality is clear: **more than half of children in Rhode Island depend on Medicaid for their health coverage**, and yet Rhode Island’s Medicaid rates for pediatricians are 25% lower than what providers are paid just across the border in Massachusetts and Connecticut. It’s no wonder pediatric practices are closing their doors to new patients—and that so many pediatricians are planning to retire without enough new doctors to replace them.

H-5988 would help fix this.

By raising Medicaid reimbursement rates for pediatric care, we can recruit and retain the pediatricians we need to keep our children healthy. It would mean more doctors accepting Medicaid patients—and more children getting timely, regular care from trusted providers, not emergency rooms.

For the families our members work with—families who are working hard every day but living paycheck to paycheck—this could mean the difference between early diagnosis of a learning disability, between preventing a small infection from becoming a hospital stay, between a child thriving or falling through the cracks.

H-5988 is about making sure that no Rhode Island child is left waiting for care because of where they live or how much money their parents make.

We urge the committee to pass **H-5988** and stand with the working families, caregivers, and children who deserve a healthier future.

Respectfully,

Alex Moore
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