

May 20, 2025

Re: Support for House Bill 5077 – Conserving Benefits for Youth in Care

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, I am writing in strong support of House Bill 5077, which establishes important protections and accountability standards for the use of federal benefits received by youth in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

This bill represents a vital step toward ensuring that youth who receive Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, veterans benefits, or railroad retirement benefits are able to retain and build their resources for future independence. Too often, youth in care—many of whom have experienced trauma and instability—lose out on the long-term benefits of funds that were meant to support their well-being and transition into adulthood.

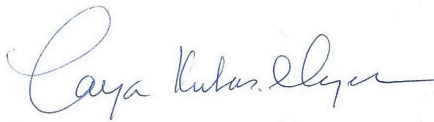
House Bill 5077 provides clear guidance for the application and use of these benefits, mandates that DCYF conserve a portion of the funds for youth starting at age 14, and creates safeguards such as notification requirements, annual accounting, and the appropriate use of tools like ABLE accounts and PASS plans to avoid unnecessary disruption of eligibility.

We commend Representatives Casimiro, Noret, and their colleagues for championing this legislation, which will help Rhode Island better align with national best practices and promote financial equity for our most vulnerable children.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass H 5077 without delay. Protecting the future of youth in care requires both compassion and action. This bill offers both.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tanja Kubas Meyer
Executive Director