



RHODE ISLAND  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS <sup>AFT</sup><sub>AFL-CIO</sub>

To: House Finance Committee  
From: James Parisi, Field Representative  
Date: May 20, 2025  
Re: **Developmental Disability Provider 2.3% Increase**  
Testimony in **support** of 2025-H 5989 (Rep. Dawson)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports H 5989 and appreciates Representative Dawson for introducing the measure. The RIFTHP represents Direct Service Providers (DSP) and other staff employed at the J Arthur Trudeau Center who provide services to adults with developmental disabilities.

The legislation would ensure an increase in state funding for developmental disabilities providers of at least 2.3% on October 1, 2025. The bill contains an escape clause where the increase would be suspended if the state's overall Medicaid budget declines by more than 20%

The RIFTHP has long-advocated for increased state support for developmental providers. Prior to some recent state funding increases permitting wage improvements for DSPs, wages were stagnant because state funding was stagnant. Staff left the agencies providing services because wages and benefits were inadequate. The RIFTHP is concerned that attention has not remained focused on this sector, and a few years of funding improvements will not be maintained in the future. If the state does not support these agencies, the staffing crisis of a few years ago will return.

The 2.3% increase called for in H 5989 matches the current annual inflation rate. The bill provides a necessary increase, but not one that will allow a significant increase in DSP pay. Still, a modest increase is meaningful to Trudeau workers. The RIFTHP encourages your support of DSPs and your support of H 5989.

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