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May 5, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney,
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House

Re: Support for House Bill 7323 – An Act Relating to Insurance – Accident and Sickness

Insurance Policies;

House Bill 7059 – Joint Resolution Making An Appropriation Of \$100,000 To The Rhode Island Office Of Healthy Aging For The Alliance For Better Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program;

House Bill 7400 – Joint Resolution Making An Appropriation Of The Sum Of \$118,422 To The Rhode Island Parent Information Network To Continue The Operation Of The Ripin Dual Ombudsman Program;

House Bill 7693 – An Act Relating To State Affairs And Government -- Health Care For Children And Pregnant Women;

House Bill 8183 – An Act Relating To State Affairs And Government --The Rhode Island Health Care Reform Act Of 2004 -- Health Insurance Oversight

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island nonprofit organizations and consumer groups with a shared mission to protect, improve, and expand equitable access to quality, person-centered, affordable health care for all.

The Coalition respectfully submits testimony in **support** of

- House Bill 7323, which would improve access to contraception without cost sharing;
- H 7059, which would increase funding for the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program;
- H 7400, which would maintain funding for RIPIN to support the Ombudsman program for Rhode Islanders enrolled in both Medicaid and Medicare;
- H 7693, which would increase the Medicaid reimbursement rates to 130% of the Medicare rates for outpatient pediatric services; and
- H 8183, which would implement the full social and human services program rate adjustments proposed by the Office of the Health Insurance Commission in year one

H 7323 would update Rhode Island state law that mandates coverage of contraception to address critical cost barriers in current access to contraception. This bill would ensure equitable access to contraception, which is a critical and preventative form of healthcare.

H 7059 would provide critical funds for critical monitoring of long-term care facilities.

H 7400 would appropriate funds for RIPIN to continue running the Ombudsman program for Rhode Islanders enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid. These Rhode Islanders – who are older or disabled, as well as earn low incomes – face high health care needs and costs, and it can often be challenging to access care and understand which plan covers which types of care.

RIPIN has been successfully serving as the Dual Ombudsman and has built a network of institutional knowledge and efficacy. The Ombudsman Program helps these Rhode Islanders navigate challenges and system complexities, troubleshoot eligibility, and contest claim denials. This program has saved Rhode Islanders more than \$2 million since 2016.

Without this funding, RIPIN would have to scale back its services through the Dual Ombudsman program. This would come after federal cuts to Medicaid and other federal programs for low-income Rhode Islanders, as well as the rising costs of food and other basic needs. Rhode Islanders enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare cannot afford a lack of coordination or increased costs for their care.

H 7693 and H 8183 would improve the capacity of Rhode Island's providers to provide quality care.

Primary care, and especially pediatric care, is in crisis as demonstrated most recently with the closing of Anchor Medical. The current shortage of pediatric health care professionals has been documented [nationally](#) and [in Rhode Island](#). As with the broader crisis in primary care, it is expected to worsen and is affecting families of all income levels.

Physicians are aging out, retiring early, or cutting back their hours. Those who remain have seen their patient rosters swell. Administrative burden, combined with decades of low reimbursement and under-investment continues to exacerbate the crisis.

For too many Rhode Islanders, a health insurance card in their pocket doesn't help if they can't access the care they need when they need it.

In SFY 2023, [Medicaid provided](#) comprehensive health insurance to 183,193 children, parents, and pregnant women through the RIte Care program. That same year, 4,112 (44%) of babies born in Rhode Island had Medicaid/RIte Care insurance. Medicaid is critical to supporting the system we all rely on, therefore, increasing Medicaid rates for pediatric care will help improve access to care for every child in Rhode Island.

These bills are critical steps in addressing Rhode Islanders' healthcare needs, and the Coalition encourages the Committee to recommend their passage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alexandra Steinberg
Coordinator, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, RIPIN, Mental Health Association RI, Latino Policy Institute, United Way of Rhode Island, Senior Agenda Coalition RI, RI Medical Society, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Blood Cancer United, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, RI Psychological Association, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter, The Womxn Project, Advocates for Better Care
