

To: House Finance Committee
From Lisa Gendron LM, CPM
Re: Support, House Bill H8174 Requiring Insurance Coverage of Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs)

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. Thank you, Representative Stewart for sponsoring and Representative Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, and Place for co-sponsoring.

My name is Lisa Gendron, RI Licensed Midwife and CPM, and I'm writing in support of House Bill 8174 /Senate Bill 2669. These bills require insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors.

Access to reimbursable lactation providers continues to be a critical issue in RI as we see poor rates of extended breastfeeding to the WHO recommendation. The impacts of breastfeeding on the health of infants and mothers/ breastfeeding parents has been well documented in the medical literature and despite efforts to increase the initiation of breastfeeding, our rates of success continue to lag other developed countries. Support is key to each person achieving their goals for breastfeeding and without reimbursement for every skilled and licensed provider our workforce is not adequate to meet the needs of the community. This also is an issue of health equity as many members of our community cannot pay out of pocket for essential supports.

I urge you to pass House Bill 8174/S2669 to require insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors to improve Rhode Islanders' access to lactation support and demonstrate to your constituents your commitment to maternal and infant's health in the State of Rhode Island. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Gendron', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa Gendron
RI LM, CPM