

Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Finance Committee

From: Meredith Lemek

Date May 5, 2026

Re: Support, House Bill 8174 Requiring Medicaid Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Meredith Lemek and I'm writing in strong support of 8174 Bill. Thank you to House Representatives Stewart, Tanzi, Voas, Giraldo, Furtado, Alzate, Cruz, Casimiro, Edwards, and Diaz for co-sponsoring.

As a Certified Perinatal Doula, I have witnessed and assisted with many births, I believe its imperative this bill is passed. Passing this bill will provide increased access to care and ultimately lead to increased health outcomes. Additionally, this would give families more of a choice in the type of care they will receive for their birth. Families deserve to choose what type of birthing care they receive regardless of income. In RI and around the country, the data regarding maternal health outcomes is concerning. Something must be done to address the issue of health disparities in maternal health outcomes, especially for Black families and families of Color. If this bill is passed, RI can and will continue to be a trailblazer in the world of maternal health.

I urge you to strongly support the passage of House Bill 8174 to ensure that all families have equal access to birthing care in order to increase maternal health outcomes in RI

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Meredith