

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



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May 5, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2026 — H 8475 — An Act Relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals – Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

Dear Chair Abney:

Please accept this letter regarding H 8475, which intends to expand the deinstitutionalization subsidy aid program in the department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals (BHDDH) to include adoptive parent(s) or siblings(s).

This program was originally conceived of in the late 1970s to make it possible for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to leave institutional settings and receive care and support in less restrictive environments when that placement was in the individual's best interests. The subsidy became part of Rhode Island's broader deinstitutionalization effort, which began earlier and continued over several decades. As a result of this history, there are currently only two parents receiving this subsidy.

Beyond this, the addition of "adoptive parent(s)" on page 3, line 29 could be considered duplicative, as adoptive parents are already included in the definition of "qualified parent applicant" on page 3, line 19. This is consistent across the department and its programs: adoptive parents are recognized as parents and are not classified as a separate group.

I urge the Honorable Members of this Committee to consider this legislation in light of the context provided above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Leclerc".

Richard Leclerc
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable David A. Bennett
Danica Iacoi, Esquire, Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the House
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy