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Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Newport Mental Health, I am writing in strong support of H8338, which would establish a refundable Rhode Island Child Tax Credit.

As one of Rhode Islands Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC's), we have a commitment to improving the lives of anyone who works, lives, and studies in Newport County. That includes the more than 36 thousand families that call this place home, and are dealing with rising costs in housing, food, and childcare.

As those factors come together, a state Child Tax Credit is one of the most direct and effective ways to reduce child poverty and support family stability. For the families we work with every day, even small increases in income can make the difference between stability and crisis. We see it when clients come into their appointments hungry, looking for a quick snack after school. We see it when our housing assistance programs help parents find a way to make rent or connect them with resources for utilities. With every family who comes through our door, we see these needs, and we do everything in our power to meet them. But more is always needed.

Direct economic support is crucial as families navigate ongoing uncertainty in federal programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, and housing assistance. When these supports become harder to access or less predictable, families often turn to community-based organizations like ours for help meeting basic needs.

Research consistently shows that child tax credits are among the most effective tools to:

- Reduce child poverty
- Improve family financial stability
- Support children's healthy development

For many families, flexible financial support allows them to cover essentials like rent, groceries, transportation, and childcare while reducing stress and improving overall well-being.

From our perspective, a Child Tax Credit is also a prevention strategy. Financial hardship is a key driver of family instability and, in some cases, involvement with child welfare systems. When families have the resources they need, they are better able to care for their children and avoid deeper system involvement.

We support H8338's proposal to establish a meaningful, refundable credit and encourage the General Assembly to adopt a benefit level that delivers real impact for families. A credit of \$650 per child would provide meaningful relief and help Rhode Island keep pace with other states that are making similar investments in children and families.



Newport Mental Health

Rhode Island has an opportunity to make a smart, evidence-based investment that strengthens families today while improving long-term outcomes for children.

Supporting our families and the future of Rhode Island should not be controversial policy. And ensuring that no child is left cold, hungry, or unsupported isn't a want, but a must for Rhode Islands future.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Rhode Island's children and families. We respectfully urge your support for H8338.

Sincerely,

Dayna Gladstein

LICSW President and CEO



Newport Mental Health