

Subject: Bill H8211 – Testimony in Support

Greetings, House Finance Committee,

My name is Baratang Stewart, in my recent role as a site Coordinator for the Parent Leadership Training Institute/Certified Community Health Worker/Community Advocate/Education Program Manager with over 7 years of experience working with families and community health initiatives in Rhode Island. Now open to new opportunities.

I am writing in support of House Bill 8211 and the proposed \$10 million investment for CHW programs.

In my work with my last employer, I've seen firsthand how Community Health Workers bridge the gap between families and systems. We provide culturally responsive outreach, help families navigate healthcare and social services, and improve trust in communities that are often underserved. Supporting and sustaining this workforce is critical to improving health outcomes and reducing disparities across Rhode Island.

I believe HB 8211 is a necessary step to ensure CHWs have the resources, training, and stability to continue this vital work. I encourage the committee to pass this bill and invest in a workforce that is already making a measurable difference in our communities.

Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective. I am happy to provide further input if helpful.

Sincerely,

Baratang Stewart

Community Member and Certified CHW.