

Testimony in Support of HB-8268  
Funding PediPRN  
House Committee on Finance  
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**The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Shallcross Smith's HB-8268,** which would allocate sufficient state funding for the Pediatric Psychiatry Resource Network (PediPRN) program.

Rhode Island parents and babies deserve to have the support they need to have healthy outcomes. Investing state funding for the PediPRN program is not only a sound investment, but also a commitment to the state's frontline workforce and to the well-being of our families with newborns.

The PediPRN program is a critical phone consultation service that supports pediatricians in addressing children's mental health needs by offering same-day specialized clinical consultations, as well as resource and referral services. One in three children, ranging from ages 3 –17, have a diagnosable mental health condition, with over half struggling to find care.<sup>1</sup> PediPRN advances health equity for vulnerable children and aids in addressing Rhode Island's shortage of mental healthcare providers. Thus far in 2026, PediPRN has supported over 3,000 children.<sup>2</sup> Without state funding to continue the program, PediPRN would shut down this September, creating a gap in support for pediatric health care providers and reducing access to care for struggling families and children.

These programs are public health interventions proven to reduce the likelihood of future reliance on state or federally funded public benefit programs, making them cost-effective investments.<sup>3</sup> The Economic Progress Institute recommends additional state investments in PediPRN to sustain these programs for Rhode Island children and families and to strengthen the network of frontline professionals working together to improve outcomes for their patients.

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<sup>1</sup> [Rhode Island Psychiatry Resource Network \(PRN\), Rhode Island Department of Health, 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Sustain RI's Psychiatry Resource Network \(PRN\) for Moms, Babies, and Children, RIght from the Start Factsheet, 2026](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Improving Outcomes for Children, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2022](#)