

May 14, 2026

Rhode Island State House of Representatives
House Committee on Finance
State House Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in Support of H-8339 – Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$500,000 to the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to write in strong **support** of **H-8339**, a joint resolution that would provide a \$500,000 state appropriation to RIPIN in FY27. This investment would strengthen a proven, statewide infrastructure of peer-to-peer support that helps Rhode Islanders navigate special education, health care, disability, and health aging systems—so that families can access services, resolve problems before they become crises, and participate fully in their schools and communities.

RIPIN is an organization where our work is our passion. Our staff has shown resilience in trying times and works tirelessly to ensure that Rhode Islanders are able to access the services and supports they need to live productive healthy lives. We meet individuals where they are at and provide them with the necessary tools to successfully navigate complex systems while enhancing their advocacy abilities.

RIPIN's core values speak to who we are and how we approach every individual and situation. Lived Experience, Collaboration, Integrity, Inclusivity, Empowerment. When you reach out to RIPIN, you're not just connecting with the one staff person, you are connecting with every individual who works there. You access the knowledge of our entire staff. RIPIN is an organization that can answer nearly any question and if we cannot, we are sure to know who you need to connect with. This applies not only to families and individuals, but we also frequently get requests from providers, other community-based organizations, as well as legislators and other state leaders. That type of workplace is extremely rare.

We are in a time when there are more questions than answers about the future of health care, special education, and support for the elderly and disabled. We humbly urge the Committee to support H-8339 and include this appropriation in the FY27 budget. Thank you for your time, for your attention to the needs of Rhode Island families, and for your continued commitment to ensuring that public systems work for the people they are designed to serve.

Sincerely,

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