

**Template for Written Testimony-Individual
Rhode Island General Assembly**

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Idalina Silva

Date: March 13, 2025

Re: House Bill 5861 - Insurance Coverage of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. Thank you to Representatives Stewart, Fogarty, McGaw, Cruz, and Casimiro for sponsoring this bill.

My name is **Idalina Silva** and I'm writing in support of House Bill 5861. This bill requires insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors.

I'm here today to advocate both personally and professionally for the passing of bill H5861. I believe the benefits it will offer patients, providers, community members and the healthcare system as a whole will be unmatched.

Born and raised in Cape Verde, at a young age I accompanied my grandmother who was a midwife to all the home births in our village, watching her provide total care for the mom and baby, was very special to me and has motivated me to pursue the same line of work. My grandmother didn't only deliver the baby, but she also made medication to help the mom with nausea with pain and to help her build her strength in order to provide for herself and the baby. This fueled me to strive to provide and mirror the same care and model.

Attending home births with my grandmother in Cape Verde, seeing the babies latch on to mom right after birth I knew this was the best way we could provide for our children. When I learned of supplemental feeding such as formula, I did not whole heartedly agree that it could deliver the same natural nourishment and benefits that breast milk does even though now it has come a long way, I still believe breastmilk is unmatched. When I had my first child at 14, I knew 100% I was going to breastfeed; I was empowered that I had the ability to provide safe nourishment to my daughter. I was dedicated, I would pump at school, store the milk in the fridge and bring it home in a cooler. All mothers should have the opportunity to breastfeed and be given accessibility to the tools, knowledge and resources and providers to do so successfully.

Our clients deserve the very best care and outcomes, bill H5861 will allow that, allow for moms, babies and families to receive patient centered care, ease of access, reduce costs and improve outcomes for mothers and babies. I'm here as

both a community member and care provider and advocate for the passing of bill H5861

I urge you to pass House Bill 5861 to require insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors to improve Rhode Islanders' access to lactation support and have access to care, clinicians, education and resources to breastfeed successfully. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.