

Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Maayan Leroy-Melamed

Date: April 9, 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 Maayan Leroy-Melamed and I'm writing in support of House Bill 5861. This bill requires insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors.

I am a pediatrician and theoretically was trained in breastfeeding and lactation in medical school and residency. I was humbled and panicked nonetheless when I had my first child, despite normal feeding patterns. I was privileged to be able to visit a drop-in lactation consultant to be able to support latching and weight gain. Being a pediatrician, I also had support of colleagues and of tailored social media pages with other lactating physicians, where I spent hundreds of hours during sleepless nights scrolling for advice. Because I had the privilege of a lactation consultant, I was able to save money by not buying formula, and bonding with my child for the experience my baby and I wanted. Every Rhode Islander should have the right to certified guidance around lactation.

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 support of tailored newborn nutrition. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.