



Testimony Re: House Bill 6368 Re: Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies

House Health and Human Services Committee

June 3, 2025

Stephanie Geller, Deputy Director

Chair Donovan and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support for House Bill 6368 and thank Representative Kislak for sponsoring this bill and Chair Donovan and Representatives Speakman, McGaw, Potter, Caldwell, Cortvriend, Cotter, and Handy for co-sponsoring. This bill would amend existing state statutes related to unfair discrimination to protect additional classes of individuals and protect against additional forms of discrimination.

Specifically, this bill would prohibit health insurers from denying benefits to individuals based on their race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, language, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, or pregnancy status or canceling, delaying or refusing to issue or reissue a health insurance plan based on these characteristics. The bill also specifically states that "no healthcare entity may...have or implement a categorical coverage exclusion or limitation for all health services related to gender transition or other gender-affirming care, or reproductive health care." This bill does not require coverage of any health service if there is a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for denying or limiting coverage.

In May 2001, Rhode Island became the second state in the country to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. Since then, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has testified on the need to protect health care providers, patients, and access to essential care through the *Health Care Provider Shield Bill* and opposed legislation that would have required educators to use names and pronouns associated with a student's biological gender instead of their gender identity and established disciplinary measures against educators for violation of these provisions.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown in protecting Rhode Islanders from discriminatory practices. We urge you to ensure that all Rhode Islanders can get the health care they need and deserve and support House Bill 67368. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.