



TIDES FAMILY SERVICES

WE NEVER GIVE UP ON A KID... NEVER!

215 Washington St.
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Tidesfs.org

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Representative Robert Craven, Sr.

Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee Members

House Lounge

State House

Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB6064

Dear Chairman Robert Craven, Sr. and members of the committee,

On behalf of Tides Family Services, I am writing in strong support of **H6064**, which would allow youth ages 14 to 17 in DCYF custody or without a permanent residence to obtain a state identification card and a certified birth certificate without requiring a parent, guardian, or foster parent's signature. This legislation is critical for the young people we serve, many of whom face unnecessary barriers to employment, education, and basic services simply because they lack proper identification.

At Tides Family Services, we work with some of the most vulnerable youth in our state—those involved in child welfare, juvenile justice, and children's behavioral health systems. Over the years, we have witnessed firsthand how the inability to obtain an ID creates significant roadblocks for these young people. Without a state ID or birth certificate, they struggle to:

- **Secure Employment** – Many jobs, including entry-level positions, require valid identification for hiring. Without it, youth in state care are at a disadvantage in gaining work experience and financial independence.
- **Obtain a Driver's License** – A lack of proper documentation prevents youth from pursuing a driver's license, which is often essential for transportation to work, school, or medical appointments.



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- **Access Housing and Public Services** – Many services, including housing programs, banking, and post-secondary education applications, require proof of identity. Youth in unstable housing situations or state custody already face immense challenges, and lack of ID further exacerbates their struggles.

For example, we recently worked with a 17-year-old in DCYF custody who was eager to start working at a local restaurant but was unable to provide the required identification. He had no parent or guardian available to sign off on an application, and without an ID, he could not legally be employed. His only option was to wait until he aged out of the system, delaying his ability to earn income and gain work experience. This is not an isolated case—these barriers are systemic, and they disproportionately impact youth who are already facing instability.

By passing this bill, Rhode Island would take a simple yet powerful step in ensuring that all youth, regardless of their family circumstances, have the ability to participate fully in society. Removing bureaucratic barriers and waiving identification fees for these youth recognizes their unique vulnerabilities and gives them the tools they need to build a successful future.

We urge you to support and help eliminate unnecessary obstacles that prevent youth in DCYF care from accessing the opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth A. Bixby, LICSW

Chief Executive Officer