



March 12, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Written Testimony to Support 2026 – H8093

Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Michelle Loranger, and I submit this written testimony as the Executive Director of Day One.

Day One has the honor to serve as the four Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the state (Kent, Newport, Providence, and Washington Counties) as well as the RI Children’s Network – State Chapter of CACs. Through this work, we see firsthand how children are harmed in environments where adults hold authority or trust—schools, programs, camps, and faith-based settings. Abuse in these settings often goes undetected or unreported due to institutional barriers, fear, or lack of clarity about reporting responsibilities. Day One is pleased to offer strong support for H8093 – Relating to Abused and Neglected Children.

This legislation reinforces mandatory reporting obligations for suspected physical, mental, or sexual abuse within educational programs or religious organizations, requiring that reports be made to the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and to law enforcement within twenty-four hours. This structure ensures that concerns are promptly elevated to those agencies responsible for investigating abuse and protecting children.

Just as importantly, the bill requires DCYF to immediately forward reports to state police, local law enforcement, Children’s Advocacy Centers, and the attorney general, ensuring coordinated and timely investigations for those (screened out) cases that do not meet current caretaker provisions. This critically important mandate will assist with a system response for those MANY cases of suspected and reported abuse and exploitation that have fallen through the cracks. This proposed referral process to law enforcement agencies and CACs is essential for mitigating a lack of system response.

Across the country, states are working to strengthen child protection laws by expanding mandated reporter requirements, improving multidisciplinary team collaboration, and ensuring that abuse in institutional settings is taken seriously. With H8093, Rhode Island continues this essential progress by providing stronger protection for vulnerable children and clearer responsibilities for the adults, organizations, and institutions entrusted with their care.

This legislation also strengthens Rhode Island’s child protection framework by expanding and clarifying definitions of child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and situations posing substantial risk of harm.

Day One strongly supports this bill as it prioritizes child safety, strengthens institutional accountability, and ensures that reports of abuse are addressed swiftly and consistently. These improvements are essential to preventing harm and improving outcomes for children and families across our state. We look forward to serving more children, teens, and families affected by abuse and exploitation following the bill’s passage, and we stand ready to collaborate closely with our child welfare and law enforcement partners to do so. Day One respectfully urges the Committee to support and advance H8093.

Thank you for your time, your commitment to survivors, and your leadership on these critical issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Loranger".

Michelle Loranger, MPA
Executive Director