

Testimony in Support of HB-6066

Temporary Caregiver Insurance

House Committee on Labor

April 9, 2025

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The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Giraldo's HB-6066, which expands the Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) by increasing the wage reimbursement rate up to 85% of workers' average weekly wages, increases the payroll contribution limit up to the federal Social Security level, expands caregiver benefits to include leave for siblings, grandchildren, or care recipients, and creates an opt-in option for gig workers and sole proprietors.

No one should have to choose between their economic security and their family. TCI allows our workers the option to take job-protected, partially-paid leave to bond with a newborn or care for a seriously ill family member. Once a leader in passing paid family leave in 2013, Rhode Island has fallen behind several newer state programs that provide more comprehensive leave, including our neighbors in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Wage Replacement:

Rhode Island's paid family leave program is fully funded by our workforce; however, workers only receive about 60% of their salary while taking paid family leave. The current program is **not** fully accessible or equitable for our essential workers – those earning minimum wage working as CNAs and child care workers. The almost 40% cut in weekly wages is not manageable for many single-income households and dual-income households with low-wage jobs. For their low wage workers, our neighbors in Massachusetts and Connecticut provide 80% and 95% of a worker's weekly wage, respectively.

Contribution Limit:

In Rhode Island, people only pay payroll taxes for TCI on their income up to \$89,200 – this is the lowest contribution limit of all states with paid leave programs. In turn, this causes Rhode Island to have the highest payroll tax for paid family and medical leave in the country – approximately 1.3%. Most of the 13 states and D.C. that provide state paid family and medical leave, including our neighbors in Massachusetts, Maine, and Connecticut, equitably fund their programs by having residents contribute through a payroll tax on income up to the Social Security Contribution limit, which taxes earnings up to \$176,100 in 2025.

Family Definition:

Many Rhode Islanders are family caregivers and are responsible for their ailing siblings, grandchildren, and other loved ones. An inclusive paid family leave program recognizes that

Rhode Island has diverse families who may not have immediate family to care for them, such as the immigrant, LGBTQ+, veterans,ⁱ and foster child communities. Expanding paid family leave is also proven to reduce the need for nursing homes and help our elders age in place.¹ This is critical considering one in four Rhode Islanders will be at or over the age of 65 by 2030.² Expanding paid family leave now means more security and independence for our elders and more Rhode Islanders getting the care they need to recover. Opt-in for Self-Employed/Gig workers:

Currently, there is no way for independent contractors, gig workers, and self-employed to contribute to and benefit from TCI/TDI. Rhode Island is one of two states (out of 13 states and D.C.) in which self-employed workers cannot opt-in for their state's paid leave program. Massachusetts and Connecticut both allow self-employed workers to opt-in to paid leave. This opt-in option will allow gig workers and self-employed workers to contribute to the fund for 12 months and then be able to take TCI.

These are necessary budget neutral investments in our state's working families. We must improve paid family leave now to ensure that RI businesses remain competitive, and all Rhode Islanders can receive the care they deserve. A comprehensive paid family leave program means a stronger Rhode Island. We strongly urge passage.

ⁱ 28 percent of former active-duty servicemembers had taken time off work to care for friends or chosen family members with serious health needs, according to the [Center on American Progress](https://www.centeronamericanprogress.org/).

¹ [Paid Leave Means a Stronger Rhode Island, National Partnership for Women & Families, 2025](#)

² [Healthy Aging Data Report, 2020, Office of Healthy Aging](#)