

Testimony in SUPPORT for House Bill 6066
AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS –
TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE – GENERAL PROVISIONS
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Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
House Committee on Labor
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Chair Corvese and honorable members of the House Committee on Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) with **support for House Bill 6066 (Rep. Giraldo)**. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) provided sexual and reproductive health care to nearly 8,000 Rhode Island patients last year. Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

As advocates for reproductive freedom, we must consider all aspects of a person's life including those that may affect their economic stability. Paid family leave is a critical component of reproductive freedom, and every person deserves economic security to care for themselves and their family with dignity. We know firsthand, through the patients we see in our health centers, the juggling act people have to play each month to pay their bills, care for their families, and meet their basic needs.

Rhode Island's paid leave program works for working people, families, and businessesⁱ and H6066 will help strengthen it. Paid leave helps improve health outcomes and helps working people remain economically secure and stay connected to their jobsⁱⁱ which is why Rhode Island must continue to enhance our program and strengthen benefits so more workers can benefit.

H6066 will make the program more accessible for minimum wage workers by increasing wage replacement which is essential for lower wage workers to be able to utilize the program. It will also bring our state law in alignment with other state paid family leave programs that have a more inclusive definition of family making it more accessible for LGBTQ+ workers and families; immigrants; people who aged out of state foster care/those who have no immediate family or relatives, and veterans. Families are constantly evolving and take many forms including blended families, single-parent families, LGBTQ families, chosen families, and multigenerational families. Yet public policy has not kept up with what American families look like today that is why including care recipient in our law is essential.

As Rhode Island law already recognizes, under the Rhode Island Uniform Parentage Act (RIUPA), signed into law in 2020, families form in many ways, and it is critical to protect all children and respect all families. This is why inclusive family definitions are so important in any paid leave policy. Family relationships are not restricted to biology, adoption, and foster care. Rather, important family relationships also arise through non-marital partnerships, birth, assisted reproduction, gestational carrier agreements, and more. It is critical that legislation such as this – that aims to promote the economic security of Rhode Island workers and the economic vitality of this state – fully includes all workers by recognizing the reality of today's diverse families and family structures.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients and communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. We urge the committee to support H 6066 which will help promote the health and economic security of all Rhode Island residents and help families to thrive instead of struggling to survive. Thank you for your time and consideration.



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ⁱ Bartel, A., Rossin-Slater, M., Ruhm, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2016, January). Assessing Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance Act: Insights from a Survey of Employers. U.S. Department of Labor Publication. Retrieved 3 December 2024, from https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/AssessingRhodeIslandTemporaryCaregiverInsuranceAct_InsightsFromSurveyOfEmployers.pdf

ⁱⁱ 7 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2023, November). Paid Leave Works: Evidence from State Programs. Retrieved 3 December, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/paid-leave-works-evidence-from-state-programs.pdf>