

4/8/25

Rhode Island General Assembly, House Labor Committee
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Letter of Support for House Bill 6066 – Paid Family and Medical Leave

Dear Members of the House Labor Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 6066, critical legislation that will strengthen and expand Rhode Island's paid family and medical leave program.

Rhode Island has long been a leader in ensuring workers have access to paid leave when they need it most. As the third state in the nation to implement a paid leave program, Rhode Island's policy has proven itself, helping workers care for new children, aging family members, and manage serious health conditions without sacrificing their income or job security. House Bill 6066 builds on this success and ensures the state's program continues to meet the evolving needs of families and caregivers.

More than 141,000 households in Rhode Island have all parents in the workforce, and each year approximately 10,300 children are born in our state. Paid leave is not a luxury, it's a necessity for families juggling work and caregiving responsibilities. Women, particularly women of color like myself, make up a significant share of Rhode Island's workforce and serve as key breadwinners for their families. Paid leave ensures these workers can continue contributing to the economy while caring for their loved ones.

The need for paid leave extends far beyond new parents. One in four Rhode Island workers is over the age of 55, and the population of residents 65 and older is expected to grow by nearly 30,000 in the coming decades. Paid leave enables older workers to address health challenges and care for others while remaining in the workforce. It also supports family caregivers, many of whom are older adults or people with disabilities themselves, who provide essential care at home, where most older adults prefer to remain as they age.

Research shows that paid leave improves health outcomes, supports economic stability, reduces reliance on institutional care like nursing homes, and helps businesses retain employees. Rhode Island's experience shows that paid leave works, for workers, families, and employers alike. A stronger paid leave program means a stronger Rhode Island.

We urge you to support House Bill 6066 and continue Rhode Island's leadership in building a family-friendly, economically vibrant state where all workers can care for their health and their families without risking their livelihoods.

Sincerely,

Robin Covington, MPA East Providence Resident and Elder Justice Advocate