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Member Agencies

Blackstone Valley
Advocacy Center
Domestic Violence
Resource Center of
South County
Elizabeth Buffum
Chace Center

Women's Resource Center

Task Force

Sisters Overcoming
Abusive Relationships

Affiliate Members

Center for Southeast Asians
Crossroads Rhode Island
Family Service of Rhode Island
McAuley Ministries –
McAuley Village
Progreso Latino
YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative Arthur J. Corvese, Chair of the House Labor Committee
Honorable Members of the House Labor Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: March 5, 2026

Re: **Support for House Bill 7968 to Improve Paid Family Leave**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence appreciates this opportunity to express our **strong support for H. 7968 (Rep. Giraldo)**. This legislation would expand and improve the Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) paid family leave program by:

- Increasing the maximum leave to 12 weeks by 2028;
- Expanding caregiving leave to include grandchildren and care recipients; and
- Establishing an opt-in option for self-employed workers and sole proprietors.

The relationship between poverty and domestic violence is well-documented – when survivors don't have access to secure economic resources, they are less able to leave an abusive relationship. When a survivor is pregnant, the stakes are even higher. Homicide is the leading cause of maternal mortality in the U.S., with Black and young mothers at a significantly elevated risk.¹ The perinatal period is a distinctly stressful and economically precarious time for many families in our state, resulting in an increased risk of family violence and loss of life.² **Investing in economic justice and financial security by expanding our TCI paid family leave program will strengthen our state's family violence prevention policies.**

Further, paid leave programs help working people remain financially secure and stay connected to their jobs, which has major economic implications. Strong paid leave programs reduce the likelihood that new mothers would fall into poverty and increase household incomes and mean working people are significantly less likely to use SNAP or other public support programs in the year after a child's birth.^{3,4}

No victim of domestic violence should have to choose between economic security and personal safety. Strengthening our paid family leave program means investing in the protective factors that we know keep mothers, women, and families safe, reducing the many costs of domestic violence on our state. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We urge you to support H. 7968 to strengthen Rhode Island's paid family leave program.**

¹ Wallace, M., Gillispie-Bell, V., Cruz, K., Davis, K., Vilda, D. (2021, November). Homicide During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period in the United States, 2018–2019. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 138(5), 762-769. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000004567>

² Bullinger, L. R., Klika, B., Feely, M., Ford, D., Merrick, M., Raissian, K., Rostad, W., Schneider, W. (2023, January). Paid Family Leave: An Upstream Intervention to Prevent Family Violence. *Journal of Family Medicine*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00486-3>

³ Stanczyk, A. (2019). Does Paid Family Leave Improve Household Economic Security Following a Birth? Evidence from California. *Social Service Review*, 93(2), 262-304. doi: 10.1086/703138

⁴ Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. P. (2012, January). Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impacts of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public. Center for Women and Work at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey Publication. Retrieved 22 January 2026, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/other/pay-matters.pdf>; Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. P. (2012, April). Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers. Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey Center for Women and Work Publication. Retrieved 22 January 2026, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/policy-matters.pdf>