

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB-7968 – Strengthening Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI)

Testimony in Support of HB-7968
House Labor Committee
March 5, 2026

Dear Chairman Corvese and members of the House Labor Committee:

My name is Sarnya KP, and I am an Independently Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of Rhode Island and also a Board member for Economic Progress Institute and Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence. I am writing to express my strong support for Representative Giraldo's HB-7968 to strengthen Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program.

Increasing TCI to 12 weeks gives workers more time to care for new children or seriously ill loved ones without losing income, supporting the health and economic stability of families across Rhode Island. Expanding the program in this way ensures that workers do not have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their jobs. HB-7968 also ensures that all workers can care for the people who matter most to them by expanding caregiving leave to include grandchildren and other dependents. The bill also strengthens access to the program by establishing an opt-in option for self-employed workers and sole proprietors. Allowing small and self-employed workers to voluntarily join TCI strengthens workforce support while maintaining flexibility. State-administered paid leave programs also help businesses retain employees and remain competitive. Strengthening TCI helps keep Rhode Island competitive with neighboring states that have expanded paid leave programs. Ensuring workers have access to adequate caregiving leave supports a stronger workforce and a more resilient state economy.

As a clinical social worker, I cannot overstate the importance of bonding time during a child's early developmental stages. Secure attachment begins to form during this critical period and plays a significant role in shaping a child's long-term emotional, social, and psychological development into adulthood. Increasing TCI would represent an investment in healthy child development and may help reduce future costs associated with family and social support services.

Reductions in TCI disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, who often lack access to additional resources, financial stability, or support systems that help ensure their child's safety and well-being during periods of separation. On a personal level, returning to work after the birth of my child was one of the most challenging transitions I have experienced. I was required to balance caring for my child, maintaining my own health, and fulfilling the responsibilities of my professional role. These circumstances definitely did not allow for an ideal outcome in any one area.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support HB-7968.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarnya KP, LICSW
Providence, RI