



June 2, 2026

Dear Chair Corvese and Members, House Labor Committee

RE: SUPPORT for H8578

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI (SACRI) is pleased to support **H8578 AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- FAMILY CAREGIVERS SUPPORT ACT OF 2013** sponsored by Representatives O'Brien. SACRI provides education and advocacy on behalf of older adults and persons with disabilities and has a long history of supporting our state's unpaid caregivers. This includes recommending passage of the Family Support Act of 2013 requiring caregiver assessments for persons seeking Medicaid home care services, the 2019 amendment calling for annual reporting on the results of the assessments, advocating for funds to end the wait list for respite services provided through the Office of Health Aging and pressing for passage of a caregiver tax credit for those caring for older persons and adults on SSDI. H8578 further amends state law relating to caregivers by establishing critical workplace protections for family caregivers.

Rhode Island's population has grown older and family caregivers are the invisible backbone of our long-term care system. Without their unpaid labor, our state's Medicaid budget for long term care would face overwhelming strain. Choosing to care for an aging parent, an ailing spouse, or a disabled family member should not force a Rhode Islander to choose between family responsibility and financial survival. H8578 would ensure that workers are protected from discrimination, retaliation, or unfair termination simply because they have caregiving responsibilities at home by providing a structured way for workers to seek relief through the RI Commission on Human Rights.

Protecting family caregivers helps delay or prevent costly nursing home placement helping to sustain our publicly supported long term service system and promotes family caregivers economic security by preventing sudden job loss.

The late 1st Lady Roslyn Carter, a staunch advocate for caregivers, famously said, "There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver." It is a reality that the vast majority of Rhode Islanders will experience caregiving at some point in their working lives. Passing H8578 aligns our workplace protections with the actual demographic needs of our state.

We respectfully urge you to support the passage of H8578. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Carol Costa, SACRI Executive Director
Maureen Maigret, SACRI Policy Advisor