

April 3, 2025

RE: In Support of H6125- House Resolution Expressing Support of the LGBTQIA+ Community

Chairman Shanley, Vice Chairs Messier and Corvese and members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

The Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF) is comprised of forty-four member organizations who join together to advocate for child well-being and family safety and stability. Our members provide a wide and deep range of services in every community in Rhode Island for behavioral and physical health, support and care for foster youth, special education, family stabilization, address domestic and sexual violence, shelter and housing. The LGBTQIA+ community is deeply valued by RICCF and we recently partnered with our Massachusetts colleagues to put on a Symposium entitled “Lifting Up LGBTQIA+ Youth and Families.”

At our symposium, which brought together 130+ RICCF and Children’s League of Massachusetts members and partners, we heard from national advocates, state officials, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community about the incredible importance of supporting this varied and vulnerable community. All our members serve LGBTQIA+ youth and family members, and the child and family serving workforce includes committed LGBTQIA+ staff as well.

Care and support for young people is critical. The Human Rights Campaign reports that LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in foster care with as many as 1 in every three youth being LGBTQ+. Not only are youth more likely to come into care, but nationally they suffer from higher rates of maltreatment even in care. Nationally, there are extremely frightening plans to return to the days of conversion therapy (banned in RI) and religious-based foster care that will heighten this discrimination.

According to the Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ young people are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers. Their national 2023 survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people, found that 41% seriously considered attempting suicide, including roughly half of all transgender and non-binary youth.

Trevor Project notes: “This heightened risk of suicide is NOT because LGBTQ+ young people are inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.” Demonstrating to young people and family members that they are valued by our state House of Representatives through this resolution is important.

Rhode Island has the opportunity to stand up for and offer a protective shield around LGBTQIA+ communities at this time when their humanity is under siege. We join with Representative Kislak and all the sponsors of this important resolution in strong support.

We urge passage of H6125.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tanja Kubas-Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tanja Kubas-Meyer
Executive Director

