



To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Shaylyn Forloney, Co-President of Doulas of Rhode Island

Date: February 3, 2026

Re: House Bill 7277- Insurance Coverage of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors

Doulas of Rhode Island supports the Coalition to Improve RI Maternal Care advocating to pass House Bill 7277 to require insurance coverage for the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors. The coalition is dedicated to promoting better maternal health care, including improved access to lactation support workers to provide support and education to families as they establish a breastfeeding (or chestfeeding) relationship with their infants. Thank you Representative Stewart for sponsoring and Representative Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, and for co-sponsoring

Breastfeeding offers many benefits for both babies and parents. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, severe lower respiratory disease, ear infections, SIDS, and gastrointestinal infections (including vomiting and diarrhea). For pre-term infants, human milk reduces the risk of necrotizing enterocolitis, (NEC), which can be severe and life-threatening. Breastfeeding parents have a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure.

The American Association of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for approximately 6 months after birth, and along with appropriate complementary foods as long as mutually desired by parent and child for 2 years and beyond.

Doulas of Rhode Island is a professional organization for doulas who serve families in RI, CT and MA. Our purpose as an area-wide doula network, is to educate the local community about doulas and provide easy access to doula services for Rhode Island and nearby families. We have many doulas who are CLCs and know how deeply important it is for families of our state to have expanded access to lactation support. It is health care. Our mission goes hand in hand with supporting House Bill 7277.

Doulas of Rhode Island strongly supports House Bill 7277 and urges passage. With your leadership, we can improve health equity and improve the maternal and child health landscape in Rhode Island. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.