



**Testimony in Support**  
**House Resolution Creating a Special Legislative Commission to Study Women's**  
**Reproductive Health Across the Life Course**  
***March 19, 2026***

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the Committee,

My name is Awilda Reinoso Lopez, and I am a Rhode Island resident, policy professional, and advocate committed to advancing equitable health outcomes for women and families. I am writing in strong support of the House Resolution creating a Special Legislative Commission to study women's reproductive health across the life course.

I was compelled to seek support from Representative Alzate after my own personal health journey. I have been diagnosed with stage IV deep infiltrating endometriosis and adenomyosis after more than two decades of searching for answers. Like many women, I experienced years of debilitating symptoms chronic pain, fatigue, gastrointestinal complications, and impacts on my mental health and professional life before receiving an accurate diagnosis. My experience reflects a broader systemic issue affecting women across Rhode Island and the nation.

This resolution is especially critical given the well-documented lack of investment in women's health research. National analyses show that only about 8–9% of National Institutes of Health research funding has historically been dedicated to women's health, despite women representing half the population and experiencing unique health needs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). Globally, funding disparities are also significant, with estimates suggesting that only about 5% of overall health research and development funding focuses specifically on women's health, contributing to persistent gaps in knowledge, treatment options, and clinical innovation (Broad Institute).

These funding inequities have real consequences. They contribute to delayed diagnoses, limited treatment pathways, and long-term impacts on women's economic security, workforce participation, and quality of life. Reproductive health must be understood as a life-course issue that includes menstruation, chronic gynecological conditions, fertility, pregnancy, postpartum health, menopause, and overall hormonal wellbeing.

Importantly, neighboring states such as Massachusetts and others across the country are beginning to advance task forces and research initiatives to better understand women's reproductive health needs. Rhode Island has an important opportunity to learn from emerging evidence and regional best practices to ensure our policies are proactive, data-driven, and equitable.

Establishing a 17-member legislative commission will create an inclusive and structured forum to examine disparities in access to care, strengthen prevention and early diagnosis strategies, improve provider awareness, and elevate the lived experiences of women whose voices have historically been overlooked in health policymaking.

Investing in women's reproductive health is an investment in families, communities, and the state's long-term economic wellbeing. I respectfully urge the Committee to support this resolution.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to improving the lives of women across our state.

Sincerely,  
Awilda Reinoso Lopez  
Senior Policy & Research Manager  
Latino Policy Institute