

## Testimony in Support of S-2811 – The RI Protect Our Healthcare Act of 2026

Senate Committee on Finance

May 5, 2026

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**The Economic Progress Institute and the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition strongly support Sen. DiPalma’s S-2811**, which would allocate \$53.2 million for fiscal year 2027 and \$109.6 million for fiscal year 2028 and every fiscal year thereafter to ensure that Rhode Islanders without health insurance can have access to healthcare.

Rhode Islanders deserve access to quality affordable healthcare, and the General Assembly has done a lot over the years toward accomplishing this goal. Unfortunately, in July 2025, Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (also known as H.R.1), which will have a series of harmful effects in RI. H.R.1 cut more than one trillion dollars in federal funding to states for Medicaid and SNAP in order to pay for tax breaks for the richest Americans. In RI, that means that **beginning FY28, the state will lose more than \$275 million per year in federal Medicaid funding**. H.R.1 will also cause **53,000 Rhode Islanders to lose health insurance** (33,000 from Medicaid and 20,000 from HealthSourceRI) – doubling the uninsured rate in our state. The combination of these and other factors (Congress allowed Affordable Care Act Subsidies to expire in 2025 – affecting 40,000 Rhode Islanders) means that insurance premiums are rising for all Rhode Islanders and the sustainability of our hospitals, free clinics, and community health centers are at risk, as they will have to provide more care without compensation.

Because H.R.1 is projected to make 33,000 Rhode Islanders lose Medicaid, the state will technically be “saving money” by not having to pay the state’s portion for those 33,000 people; that savings is \$26.6 million in FY27 and 54.8 million in FY28. **The RI Protect Our Healthcare Act of 2026** would direct the state to allocate \$53.2 million for FY27 and \$109.6 million for FY28 and every fiscal year thereafter – which is double the amount of RI’s annual Medicaid “savings.” The money would be used to invest in systems to prevent hospitals, community health centers, and free clinics from closing due to the financial hardship of providing increased care for people without insurance or compensation. **S-2811** also creates a healthcare program for the uninsured, modeled after similar initiatives in New York, Massachusetts, and elsewhere, to provide essential healthcare services (beyond the emergency room) like prescription medication, durable medical equipment, dialysis, or scheduled surgical services. This bill is especially critical considering so many Rhode Islanders are already struggling to meet their basic needs without assistance.

Please protect Rhode Islanders and the healthcare systems upon which we all rely. We strongly urge passage of S-2811.