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March 31, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903

Re: **Support Senate Resolution 2816 – Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$118,422 to the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN)**

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island nonprofit organizations and consumer groups with a shared mission to protect, improve, and expand equitable access to quality, person-centered, affordable health care for all.

The Coalition respectfully submits testimony in **strong support** of the appropriation for the RIPIN Dual Ombudsman program for Rhode Islanders enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare. These Rhode Islanders – who are older or disabled, as well as earn low incomes – face high health care needs and costs, and it can often be challenging to access care and understand which plan covers which types of care.

RIPIN has been successfully serving as the Dual Ombudsman and has built a network of institutional knowledge and efficacy. The Ombudsman Program helps these Rhode Islanders navigate challenges and system complexities, troubleshoot eligibility, and contest claim denials. This program has saved Rhode Islanders more than \$2 million since 2016.

Without this funding, RIPIN would have to scale back its services through the Dual Ombudsman program. This would come after federal cuts to Medicaid and other federal programs for low-income Rhode Islanders, as well as the rising costs of food and other basic needs. Rhode Islanders enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare cannot afford a lack of coordination or increased costs for their care.

We strongly encourage the Senate Finance committee to maintain funding for this critical program to continue providing essential services to Rhode Islanders enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexandra Steinberg
Coordinator, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, RIPIN, Mental Health Association RI, RI Health Center Association, Latino Policy Institute, United Way of Rhode Island, Senior Agenda Coalition RI, RI Medical Society, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Blood Cancer United, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, RI Psychological Association, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter, The Womxn Project, Advocates for Better Care
