



May 5, 2026

Chairman DiPalma  
Senate Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Support of the Family Home Visiting bill S2845**

Dear Chairman and members of the Committee,

My name is Marie Palumbo-Hayes, LICSW, the Chief of Community Health at Family Service of Rhode Island, a health and human service organization with the mission “to advance opportunity and hope in our communities.” In my role, I oversee a variety of programs, which includes early childhood family visiting services under contract with RIDOH: First Connections and Healthy Families America and Early Intervention under EOHHS.

I write today in strong support of Senator Valverde’s S2845 and encourage you to ensure that Rhode Island adequately funds the state’s home visiting programs, puts the First Connections Program in statute, requires Rhode Island Department of Health to change their data reporting requirements and requires Medicaid to increase rates for Early Intervention Providers to the recommended 2025 OHIC review.

I urge you to both ensure that Rhode Island meets the state funding matching requirements for the federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds in order to be able to draw down all allowable federal funds so that high-quality home visiting programs such as Healthy Families America are offered to all families who could benefit. Rhode Island is one of a few states that has not received generous federal funds for the past several years that the state would have been eligible for if there was the full match.

For FY27, I urge Rhode Island to make an investment in general funds required to receive the \$1.6 million match to help fund Early Childhood home visiting programs, increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for Early Intervention providers to the recommendations from the 2025 OHIC review, and that the First Connections Program is put into statute. All of these programs are vital to the health and wellbeing of babies, children and their families.

Sincerely,

*Marie Palumbo-Hayes, LICSW*

Marie Palumbo-Hayes, LICSW  
Chief of Community Health, Family Service of Rhode Island