



**Testimony Re: S-2255, the *Rhode Island Marketplace Affordability Act*
Senate Health and Human Services Committee**

May 5, 2026

**Michaela Carroll, MPH, Senior Policy Associate for Early Childhood
Education, Development, & Health**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support for Senate Bill 2255, the *Rhode Island Marketplace Affordability Act*. This bill would help lower the cost of health insurance for people who buy coverage through HealthSourceRI (HSRI), replacing expired federal assistance that ended in 2025, and help reverse the loss of insurance for the more than 13,000 Rhode Islanders who are expected to lose coverage.

Over 40,000 Rhode Islanders have insurance coverage through HSRI - Rhode Island's health insurance marketplace. This exchange serves as a backstop and is available to anyone who cannot get coverage elsewhere. These individuals do not qualify for or are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare and cannot access employer-based coverage. In 2024, 2,250 children had coverage through the health insurance exchange, and these families will have seen the cost of their health insurance coverage increase dramatically in 2026. The *Rhode Island Marketplace Affordability Act* would fully replace the expired federal tax credits that allowed families and individuals to afford their health insurance premiums for marketplace insurance plans.

When the federal Enhanced Premium Tax Credits expired in 2025, Rhode Islanders who purchased coverage through HealthSourceRI saw monthly premiums double, on average. When there are sudden, significant increases in health insurance costs, particularly at a time where other costs are increasing as more Rhode Islanders will go without insurance, enroll in a less comprehensive plan, or skip necessary health services. We expect that over 50,000 Rhode Islanders will lose their health insurance coverage between 2026 and 2027 due to federal cuts to Medicaid and the loss of federal tax credits, doubling Rhode Island's uninsured population. Fully restoring these income-based tax credits would help nearly 13,000 HSRI enrollees, including children and families, maintain their coverage.

A dramatic increase in our uninsured population will increase the cost of health insurance coverage for all Rhode Islanders because individuals who lose coverage will still need health care. This will increase the amount of

uncompensated care that will be required to support the health of these Rhode Islanders.

We appreciate the leadership that the Governor has shown in proposing a program to replace some of the expired federal tax credits in his proposed FY 2027 budget, but we recommend passage of S-2255 to fully replace the expired federal assistance and support the 13,000 individuals who are expected to lose their coverage without this support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.