

Testimony in Support of S-2383 & S-2381 – Health Coverage for Services  
Provided by Midwives and Licensed Lactation Counselors  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
May 5, 2026  
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**The Economic Progress Institute supports Sen. Mack’s S-2381 and S-2383,** which would require health insurance coverage for services provided by licensed certified professional midwives and licensed certified lactation counselors, respectively.

Rhode Island families deserve access to quality perinatal care. Nationally, and in Rhode Island, there are significantly higher rates of maternal mortality for Black and Latino women compared to White women.<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive insurance coverage for perinatal care, which includes access to midwives and lactation counselors, advances health equity and improves overall outcomes for families and babies.<sup>2</sup> **Expanding access to perinatal resources like midwives and lactation counselors would help save lives and reduce racial health disparities.** Rhode Island has already invested in equitable perinatal health coverage by being the first state to pass and fully implement a doula coverage requirement for Medicaid and private plans.<sup>3</sup> Midwives and lactation counselors are critical in providing a continuity of support to parents and are proven to improve outcomes and increase access to services, particularly for low-income and marginalized communities.<sup>4</sup>

Requiring health insurance coverage for midwives and lactation counselors would also help strengthen the local workforce. In 2022, the Rhode Island Department of Health invested in developing the workforce of perinatal and postpartum community practitioners by supporting certifications in lactation support, perinatal mental health, and child birth education. Sen. Mack’s S-2381 and S-2383 would provide support and sustainability for these perinatal professionals and the critical services they provide to Rhode Island families and children.

The Economic Progress Institute urges passage.

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<sup>1</sup> [RI Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health: Report to the Legislature, 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Dockins et al., Lactation Consultant Access and Breastfeeding Outcomes in the United States, 2025](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Private Insurance Coverage of Doula Care: Spring 2025 State of the States, National Health Law Program, 2025](#)

<sup>4</sup> [A Community-Led Approach to Transforming Maternity Care, The Commonwealth Fund, 2024](#)