

**Written Testimony-Individual  
Rhode Island General Assembly**

**To:** Senate Health and Human Services Committee

**From:** Rita Beyene

**Date:** April 10, 2025

**Re:** Support, Senate Bill 479 Requiring Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Rita Beyene and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 479. Thank you to Senator Mack for sponsoring and Senators Vargas, Kallman, Murray, Lauria, Acosta, Urso, Valverde, Quezada, DiMario, and Ujifusa for co-sponsoring.

I am a student at Brown University, deeply interested in reproductive justice and health, and see a direct tie between this bill and the upholding of reproductive justice in the state of Rhode Island. Reproductive justice is widely defined as the right to have a child, to not have a child, and to raise that child in a safe and healthy environment. This bill further upholds Rhode Island's current reproductive justice forward policies in protecting a person's right to birth and raise a child in a safe and healthy environment. Allowing certified professional midwives to be reimbursed for their work through patient insurance will increase affordability and access to this amazing care statewide. This is especially important with increasing maternal mortality rates among Black women. Midwives have been proven to improve the quality of care and rapid and sustained reductions in maternal and newborn mortality, especially in Black birthing people.

I urge you to strongly support the passage of Senate Bill 479 to ensure that all families in Rhode Island have access to insurance coverage of CPMs and improve the health of the most vulnerable birthing people in Rhode Island. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.