



**Testimony in Support of H7091, an Act Relating to Insurance – Accident and
Sickness Insurance Policies (annual and lifetime limits)**

House Health and Human Services Committee

February 15, 2024

Nina Harrison, Policy Director, The Economic Progress Institute

The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports Rep. Kislak’s H7091, which codifies the protections of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that relate to lifetime and annual limits on insurance coverage. Rhode Islanders value safety, fairness, and good health; we must ensure that insurance companies treat Rhode Islanders fairly, especially our sickest and most vulnerable residents who would be subject to annual and lifetime coverage limits.

The ACA currently prohibits caps on annual and lifetime coverage. However, before the ACA, insurance companies could set annual and lifetime dollar limits on what they would spend for an individual’s coverage; you were required to pay the cost of all care exceeding those limits. This was especially problematic for people struggling with chronic and persistent mental illness, fighting cancer or heart disease, in severe accidents, with seriously ill children, or battling chronic conditions. As a result of these annual and lifetime limits, many individuals and families were forced into bankruptcy trying to afford the balance of their medical care. Since this ACA prohibited the use of these coverage caps, data has shown that personal bankruptcies declined by nearly 50% nationally. Since its passage, the ACA has been under relentless threat of dismantlement and repeal. If the ACA or any of its consumer protection components are ever repealed, H7091 would ensure that insurance coverage in RI can’t be cut off based on a person’s health status. Failure to pass H7091 would leave Rhode Islanders vulnerable to federal rule changes and serious gaps in coverage.

In addition to providing important health care consumer protections, this bill is budget neutral. The bill would merely align RI law with current health insurance practices that have been in place for more than a decade since implementation of the ACA. RI would also join the ranks of more than 20 states that have already codified these and/or other key ACA consumer protections, including Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut. We urge you to pass H7091.