



Dean, School of Social Work

March 5, 2024

**Re: Testimony in Support of HR 7627**

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Dr. Mary Archibald, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work BSW Program at RIC, and I am writing in support of House Bill HR-7627. Thank you Rep. Casimiro for sponsoring the bill.

The special legislative commission proposed in this bill is vital to the recruitment and retention of state child welfare workers by addressing the difficulty in filling positions at DCYF and increasing the number of workers from diverse backgrounds. This collaboration will study the feasibility of using federal dollars to provide Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Masters of Social Work (MSW) students who are interested in a career in child welfare with classes, internships, and a stipend for their tuition and books.

As a member of the special legislative commission to study and provide recommendations for change in the merit system for DCYF and DHS, one of the recommendations I support is to strengthen partnerships with higher education institutions to create a pipeline for social service workers. This proposed commission will make recommendations to promote best practices by providing high quality social work education and training to students as they transition into a position as a child welfare worker. It is the hope that this partnership will ensure a shared responsibility for the safety, permanency, and protection of the most vulnerable children in the State. The School of Social Work and the leadership of Rhode Island College join me in urging you to vote in support of HR-7627.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Archibald  
Assistant Professor  
BSW Program  
Rhode Island College