

April 4, 2024

RE In Support of H-7802 RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- STATE IDENTIFICATION CARDS FOR MINORS WITHOUT RESIDENCE ACT

Chair Craven, First Vice Chair McEntee, Second Vice Chair Knight and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for H7802- State Identification Cards for Minors without Residence Act. Our thanks to Senator Kallman and co-sponsors for introduction of this bill which would resolve the need for identification for youth without permanent residence due to custody within the RI Department of Children, Youth, and Families or homelessness.

The Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF) is comprised of forty-three member organizations who provide and advocate for family strengthening and support resources, comprehensive child and family services including: behavioral health, special education, juvenile justice, domestic violence, sexual assault, and healthcare services; foster care and residential treatment programs, youth BASIC housing and family shelter and housing programs.

Identification is a basic need for all and youth who are without permanent residence or subject to frequent changes of residence have particular challenges with identification. One of our providers noted that inability to cash checks due to lack of state identification cards is a barrier for youth in residential programs, independent living, and the Voluntary Extension of Care program who are employed. Youth are forced to sign their checks over to other adults or go to payday lenders. Youth in care or without permanent residence also do not have an easy way to get identification often because they aren't eligible for drivers licenses due to lack of access to insurance.

Access to birth certificates is also a critical issue that would be addressed by S2684 for youth sixteen and older. We respectfully suggest that if both the state identification card and birth certificate access could be made available for youth 14-21 under the same system, that could be helpful to streamline access to important documentation.

We thank you for your consideration and urge your support of S2684. The legislation provides important support for youth independence and self-efficacy.

Sincerely,



Tanja Kubas-Meyer
Executive Director