

February, 13, 2024

Re: Testimony in Support of H7171

Dear Chairperson Corvese and members of the House Labor Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Niemiec. I live and work in Newport. I am a psychiatrist, a business owner, and a mother of two.

I support House bill 7171, because six weeks is too short of a time to spend at home with a newborn. I know this personally, as a mother, and professionally, as a psychiatrist. I treat a number of Rhode Island mothers who have suffered significant setbacks in their mental health due to not having paid leave after the birth of their children. If these women had 12 weeks of paid leave following birth, they would have been at significantly reduced risk of developing postpartum psychiatric issues. The postpartum period is a delicate time, when a mother is building her confidence in caring for a fragile newcomer. Please bring Rhode Island up to 21st century standards and grant 12 weeks of paid leave.

I urge you to vote in favor of bill H7171.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Niemiec, MD

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