

TESTIMONY. SUPPORT H-7171 (Girlando) Bill to improve RI's PAID FAMILY LEAVE

To: Chair, Clerk and Member of the Committee

From: L Shaw, MD, MSSW, Board of Directors Member, Economic Progress Institute

Date: 2/14/24

I urge your strong consideration to support the Paid Family Leave Bill.

Having spent my career as a pediatrician, I understand the critical importance of allowing new parents the time to bond and nurture their newborns. As a mother, I know the value of the opportunity of time to learn to breastfeed. As a pediatrician, I know the value of successfully breastfeeding for at least the baby's first months of life. This bill increases time for new parents with their newborns.

I also fully appreciate the value of children who have aged out of foster care being included in the definition of "family". This bill expands the definition of family.

And, I have witnessed the higher infant mortality of blacks and the higher morbidities of their mothers postpartum. Equity for birthing parents/babies is another goal of this important bill.

Pediatricians fight for children, but we also fight for the families of which children are a part. I know the crisis we face in the cost for elder care in this country. My own mother required a nursing home. Her care there was suboptimal. She was lonely, unable to control her time, unable to be around her family. This bill will help more elders to age in place, with family.

As a Board Member of the Economic Progress Institute, I urge you to support H 7171. The EPI supports those policies which improve economic security and opportunities for citizens of RI, especially those most in need. This bill is definitely an important step for Rhode Island.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Linda Shaw  
Member, Board of Directors, Economic Progress Institute