



Daniel J. McKee  
Governor

Maria E. Cimini  
Director

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese  
Chair, House Committee on Labor  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
via email: [Rep-Corvese@rilegislature.gov](mailto:Rep-Corvese@rilegislature.gov)  
via email: [HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov)

Re: H-7171 – Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance

Dear Chairman Corvese:

I write today in support of H-7171 – Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Temporary Disability Insurance, which would make siblings, grandchildren, and care recipients eligible for temporary caregiver benefits. Rhode Island has been a leader when implementing the paid family leave law, ensuring that working families have financial support when they need to take time off work to care for a seriously ill family member. Since 2014, Rhode Islanders have been able to utilize this program to replace wages when taking time off to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, or to bond with a new child.

According to AARP, there are over 121,000 caregivers in Rhode Island providing 113 million hours of unpaid family care. Recognizing and supporting family caregivers is crucial to the health, economic, and social well-being of both the caregiver themselves and the people who receive their care. Nationally, nearly 7 million grandparents live with at least one grandchild under the age of 18; one in 10 American children live in a home with at least one grandparent present. Often, grandparents become the primary caregivers to grandchildren when parents experience difficulties. Expansion of allowable relationships to include siblings and grandchildren would provide much needed supports to countless family caregivers.

The Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) is the designated state unit on aging, and we are charged with advocating for laws, policies and investments that protect the rights and agency of older adults, adults living with disabilities, and family caregivers. As such, OHA offers that H-7171 recognizes the dynamic nature of caregiving and provides for additional supports that can keep families together, aging in place with the people and communities they love.

As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter. I urge the committee to support this bill. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island's older adults and their families are appreciated.

Regards,

  
Maria E. Cimini  
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor  
The Honorable Joshua J. Giraldo  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire – Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker  
Lynne Urbani, Policy Director