



Parents Leading for Educational Equity
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House Committee on Labor

From: Parents Leading for Educational Equity

Subject: Testimony in Support of Legislation H7171:RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE -- GENERAL PROVISIONS

Date: February 14, 2024

Greetings members of the House Committee, my name is Ramona Santos Torres I am the executive director of [Parents Leading for Educational Equity](https://pleeri.org) (PLEE) and a member of the steering committee for the RIght from the Start Campaign. We are a grassroots, family advocacy organization fighting for equitable systems of care for families and children. On behalf of PLEE and the parents we represent, I want to express the **support** for house bill H7171. As a family serving organization, we are deeply invested in the well-being of families and we believe that the passing of H7171 is a crucial step in addressing the substantial challenges faced by families in our community who lack caregiver insurance, and it brings forth benefits that can alleviate the burdens placed on them during times of need. Without the safety net provided by comprehensive caregiver benefits, families may find themselves grappling with the dilemma of choosing between fulfilling caregiving responsibilities and maintaining financial stability. This can result in undue stress, strained family relationships, and a potential decline in overall well-being.

The proposed changes to the definitions in Section 28-39-2 reflect a deep understanding of the intricacies involved in assessing benefit eligibility. By extending the base period for members of the United States military service, the Rhode Island National Guard, or a United States military reserve force who served in a combat operation during their military service, the legislation acknowledges the unique challenges faced by these individuals and strives to provide equitable support. Furthermore, the expanded definition of "average weekly wage" ensures that individuals facing temporary disability are not disadvantaged by an oversimplified calculation. This nuanced approach is particularly crucial for families, as it guarantees that benefit rates accurately reflect the financial circumstances of those undergoing caregiving responsibilities during periods of sickness.

The implementation of a thorough structure for temporary caregiver insurance, as detailed in Section 28-41-34, represents a significant improvement. This framework directly tackles the difficulties families face while managing caregiving duties for diverse family

members amidst temporary disability situations. The advantages specified in the proposed legislation serve as a vital support system for families, alleviating financial pressures and guaranteeing that individuals can meet their caregiving responsibilities without jeopardizing their financial stability.

We urge the House Committee on Labor to support this legislation. By doing so, we can address the pressing challenges faced by families without caregiver insurance and pave the way for a more compassionate and supportive community. We commend the sponsors of H7171 for their commitment to the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your tireless dedication to the welfare of our community.

Sincerely,

Ramona Santos Torres
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