



641 Bald Hill Road  
Warwick, RI 02886  
401-467-9940  
www.ricadv.org  
ricadv@ricadv.org  
24-hour Helpline:  
800-494-8100

### *Member Agencies*

Blackstone Valley  
Advocacy Center

Domestic Violence  
Resource Center of  
South County

Elizabeth Buffum  
Chace Center

Women's Resource Center

### *Task Force*

Sisters Overcoming  
Abusive Relationships

### *Affiliate Members*

Center for Southeast Asians

Crossroads Rhode Island

Family Service of Rhode Island

McAuley Ministries –  
McAuley Village

Progreso Latino

YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative Arthur J. Corvese, Chair of the House Labor Committee  
Honorable Members of the House Labor Committee

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director  
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: February 14, 2024

Re: **Support for House Bill 7171 to Expand and Improve Paid Family Leave**

---

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR, our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence appreciates this opportunity to express our **strong support for H-7171 (Rep. Giraldo)**. This legislation would expand and improve the Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) paid family leave program by better supporting all caregiving responsibilities and the needs of all RI families, especially those with lower incomes. This legislation would, among other things:

- Increase the number of weeks a worker can use from 6 to 12 weeks
- Expand the family definition regarding caregiving to include siblings, grandchildren, and care recipients (to mirror the RI Paid Sick and Safe Days law)
- Increase the weekly dependent allowance from \$10 to \$20 or seven percent of the individual's benefit rate (whichever is greater)

The relationship between poverty and domestic violence is well-documented – when survivors don't have access to secure economic resources, they are less able to leave an abusive relationship. When a survivor is pregnant, the stakes are even higher. Homicide is the leading cause of maternal mortality in the U.S., with Black and young mothers at a significantly elevated risk.<sup>1</sup> **The perinatal period is a distinctly stressful and economically precarious time for many families in our state, resulting in an increased risk of family violence and loss of life.<sup>2</sup> Investing in economic justice and financial security by expanding our TCI paid family leave program will strengthen our state's family violence prevention policies.**

The societal costs associated with intimate partner violence are substantial. According to the CDC, the lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives.<sup>3</sup>

No victim of domestic violence should have to choose between economic security and personal safety. **Strengthening our paid family leave program means investing in the protective factors that we know keep mothers, women, and families safe, reducing the many costs of domestic violence on our state.**

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We urge you to support H-7171 to expand and strengthen Rhode Island's paid family leave program.**

<sup>1</sup> Wallace, M., Gillispie-Bell, V., Cruz, K., Davis, K., Vilda, D. (2021, November). Homicide During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period in the United States, 2018–2019. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 138(5), 762-769. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000004567>

<sup>2</sup> Bullinger, L. R., Klika, B., Feely, M., Ford, D., Merrick, M., Raissian, K., Rostad, W., Schneider, W. (2023, January). Paid Family Leave: An Upstream Intervention to Prevent Family Violence. *Journal of Family Medicine*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00486-3>

<sup>3</sup> "Preventing Intimate Partner Violence." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (2022, October) [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html)