

TOM RODRIGUES LCSW

2/14/2024

House Labor Committee
RI legislature
Re:H7171

Dear members of the house labor committee,

My name is Tom Rodrigues and I am a licensed social worker in the state of RI. I am writing you in regards to H7171, and urging the committee to support this bill for the benefit of Rhode Islanders. I have worked with children, youth and families for many years and I have witnessed first-hand the importance of a strong family unit. By supporting this bill, you also support the idea that it takes a village and allow for families to tangibly be there for each other when it matters most.

I also am writing this letter as a new father, and as a loving husband. My wife and I welcomed our son into his world on October 11th of 2022, throughout her pregnancy through childbirth I was floored at the amount of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual anguish my wife endured. I am very thankful that at the time I had 5 weeks to help support her and our new child. But it did not feel nearly enough. When I returned to work my wife and I struggled mightily to help support our child, and I struggled with supporting her. We struggled despite being fortunate to have family which could support us, and for far too many of our families that is not the case.

My own anecdotal story only highlights the benefit this bill could have for new parents, but extended TCI would strengthen the care that Rhode Islanders would experience across the lifespan, without punishing those who seek to care for them. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Tom Rodrigues LCSW

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