



March 3, 2022

Rhode Island State House
House Committee on Finance

Re: **Support** of Budget Article 12, Section 7, **“Medicaid Program Expansions”** and H-7484, **“Health Care for Children and Pregnant Women”**

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of House Committee on Finance:

RIPIN thanks the House Committee on Finance for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of** Budget Article 12, Section 7 and H-7484 (“Cover All Kids”), which would provide Medicaid access to any low-income child living in Rhode Island regardless of immigration status.

RIPIN believes that “Cover All Kids” will ameliorate health disparities seen by children in families without documented immigration status. Access to health care, including both routine and acute care services, is instrumental in improving health outcomes. This is particularly true for children with special health care needs, a population with which RIPIN has significant experience. Children without documented immigration status cannot currently receive health care services through Medicaid, leading to delayed care and worse health outcomes. Further, many Medicaid-eligible children in mixed-status families are not enrolled in Medicaid due to misunderstandings about the Medicaid system. The “Cover All Kids” bill will improve health outcomes by bringing these individuals into the insurance system.

While this extension of Medicaid eligibility incurs State costs, these costs are already in the system. When uninsured individuals are hospitalized and cannot pay for their health care services, Rhode Island taxpayers end up footing the bill. And, more importantly, ensuring that all Rhode Island children are able to access health care is simply the right thing to do.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments in **support** of “Cover All Kids.” RIPIN is a statewide nonprofit that provides many services supporting health care access for children with special health care needs, and which operates the State’s designated health insurance consumer-assistance program, RIREACH, which helped several thousand Rhode Islanders save more than \$5 million in health care costs since 2018.

Sincerely,

/s/

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