

Testimony in Support of HB-7275 & HB-7277
Health Coverage for Services Provided by Licensed Lactation Counselors
and Midwives
House Committee on Health and Human Services
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The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Stewarts' HB-7275 and HB-7277, which would mandate health insurance coverage for licensed certified lactation counselor services and services provided by licensed certified professional midwives.

Rhode Island families deserve access to quality perinatal care. Comprehensive insurance coverage for perinatal care, which includes access to lactation counselors and midwives, advances health equity and improves overall outcomes for families and babies.¹ Nationally, and in Rhode Island, there are significantly higher rates of maternal mortality for Black and Latino women compared to White women.² Expanding access to coverage for these perinatal resources would help save lives and reduce racial health disparities. Rhode Island has already invested in equitable perinatal health coverage by being the first state to pass and fully implement a doula coverage requirement for Medicaid and private plans.³ Midwives and lactation counselors are critical in providing a continuity of support to parents and are proven to improve outcomes and increase access to services, particularly for low-income and marginalized communities.⁴

Mandating health insurance coverage for licensed lactation counselors and midwives would also aid in strengthening the local workforce. In 2022, the Rhode Island Department of Health invested in developing the workforce of perinatal and postpartum community practitioners, which supported certifications in lactation support, perinatal mental health, and child birth education. Representative Stewarts' HB-7275 and HB-7277 would provide support and sustainability for these perinatal professionals and the services they provide to Rhode Island families and children.

¹ [Dockins et al., Lactation Consultant Access and Breastfeeding Outcomes in the United States, 2025](#)

² [RI Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health: Report to the Legislature, 2024](#)

³ [Private Insurance Coverage of Doula Care: Spring 2025 State of the States, National Health Law Program, 2025](#)

⁴ [A Community-Led Approach to Transforming Maternity Care, The Commonwealth Fund, 2024](#)

Mandating health coverage for services provided by licensed lactation counselors and professional midwives would advance health equity and strengthen the perinatal workforce. The Economic Progress Institute urges passage.