



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
ONE UNION STATION  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903  
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

**Testimony Re: SR-152 – Adopting the Rules of the Senate for 2023-2024**

**Senate Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight Committee**

**February 6, 2023**

**Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to ask the Senate Rules Committee and the Senate to **consider changing its rules to permanently allow for remote testimony at hearings and to allow for legislative commissions to meet remotely.**

The General Assembly allowed for remote participation during the pandemic, and we believe this allowed a more varied group of RI residents to share their perspectives on important topics to inform policymaking, particularly parents, youth, and busy frontline professionals (many of whom are also parents). Offering remote testimony and meetings allows people who live farther from Providence to participate or those who may be traveling or out of state on the evening of a hearing. Remote technology can also be successfully used to offer simultaneous interpretation so that legislators can hear from and interact with constituents who are not comfortable speaking or writing in English.

Child care is difficult for many people to figure out during traditional working hours, let alone during the evening and night time hours when the General Assembly meets. Requiring individuals to testify in person often means people must wait in the State House for hours into the night. This is a major barrier for parents who need to spend their evenings giving children baths, helping to brush their teeth, reading bedtime stories, and helping with homework, etc.

Several states across the country have continued the practice of allowing remote testimony and allowing for remote participation in meetings and commissions. We would like for the General Assembly to offer the same opportunities here.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.