



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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**Testimony Re: Article 4, Section 6 – Relating to Debt Management Act
Joint Resolutions, RICHIST
House Finance Committee
April 8, 2021
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today.

As a data-based children’s policy advocacy organization, **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT strongly supports Article 4 which proposes to borrow \$17.0 million to replace DCYF’s child welfare data system (RICHIST) that has been in place since 1997.** Total funding for this new system would be \$28 million, and the state will leverage federal funds to cover up to 40% of the total cost of the system. Having a new data system will enhance DCYF’s ability to ensure the safety of children and youth in its care by supporting DCYF staff to input and access information in real time while working with children and youth in the field.

As a community partner, we also rely heavily on DCYF data to publish the annual [Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook](#), including all of the indicators in its [Safety Section](#), and other [child welfare publications](#) that help the state understand how children in the care of DCYF are faring and make data-informed decisions about the policies and practices that can improve child and youth outcomes.