



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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**Testimony Re: HB 5006 Equality in Abortion Coverage Act (EACA)**  
**House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 6, 2023**  
**Kaitlyn Rabb, Policy Analyst**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for House Bill 5006. This bill would ensure equitable access for health coverage for abortion services for state employees and low-income people covered by Medicaid. We would like to thank Majority Whip Kazarian for sponsoring this legislation and thank the cosponsors Representatives Felix, Ajello, Alzate, Blazejewski, Fogarty, McEntee, Knight, Giraldo, and Carson.

Health care before pregnancy is important for maintaining women's reproductive health and ensuring that they can access the reproductive health services they may need to become pregnant, if and when they want to. In Rhode Island, there are racial and ethnic disparities in health coverage for women's health that impact health outcomes in the short- and long-term. In Rhode Island, Women of Color are more likely to be uninsured and be covered by RIte Care/Medicaid before their pregnancy than white women. Between 2016 and 2020, 21% of Hispanic/Latina women and 8% of non-Hispanic Black women, did not have insurance compared to only 4% of non-Hispanic white women.

Currently, Rhode Island law prohibits health insurance coverage for abortion access for Rhode Islanders covered by state-funded insurance, including those working in the public sector and those covered by Medicaid. This policy disproportionately impacts access to reproductive health services for Black and Hispanic Rhode Island women and contributes to inequities in health care access and outcomes.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT urges Rhode Island to provide equitable access to comprehensive reproductive health care including through passage of the *Equality in Abortion Coverage Act* and continue to address systemic factors that contribute to poor health outcomes and disparities in health outcomes for Rhode Island women and families. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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