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Testimony Re: Article 4, Relating to Debt Management Act Joint Resolutions, RICHIST

Senate Finance Committee

August 18, 2020

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide 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 \$28.2 million, including \$11.2 million from federal funds. 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.