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Testimony Re: H7541 Relating to Uniform Parentage Act
House Judiciary Committee
February 26, 2020
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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 7541 sponsored by Representative McEntee with the amendments proposed by GLAD. This bill would establish a process for married and unmarried parents to confirm their parentage of children born into a relationship with mutual intent and through assisted reproduction.

The landscape of families has transformed in recent decades and family structure has become more diverse. According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, as many as 6 million children and adults have an LGBT parent. In order to protect the security of the parent-child relationship, LGBTQ families need to create legal ties to their children. It is critical to update state laws to reflect equal treatment of diverse family systems and guarantee the right of LGBTQ families to secure parentage.

Ninety percent of a child's brain development occurs in the first five years of life, and the earliest days and months are critical. This bill will add critical stability to new families as they support the healthy development of their children.

House Bill 7541 with the proposed amendments will help to ensure children born through assisted reproduction have access their parents' health insurance. Children who have health insurance coverage are healthier and have fewer preventable hospitalizations those who are uninsured.

We urge the passage of House Bill 7541 with the proposed amendments to update Rhode Island's parentage laws and streamline the process for same-sex couples to establish parentage of their own children.

Thank you Representative McEntee for sponsoring this important bill and also to co-sponsors Speaker Mattiello and Representatives Craven, Caldwell and Shekarchi.