



May 12, 2026

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: In Support of H7794, Sustain Home Visiting Act

Dear Chair Abney and members of the Committee:

We write in strong support of Rep Giraldo's bill, H7794, which would strengthen and sustain the state's family home visiting system and ensure Rhode Island fully leverages available federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV).

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For over 190 years, we at Children's Friend have worked to advance the well-being and healthy development of the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island. Today, alongside our permanency, nutrition services, child care, Head Start and Pre-K programs, we serve around 330 children in our evidence based home visiting program, Healthy Families America. We serve another 650 families in First Connections.

Family home visiting is a voluntary, evidence-based strategy that pairs pregnant people and parents of young children with trained nurses, social workers, and parent educators who meet with families where they live. Home visitors support healthy pregnancies, promote child development, connect families to health care and community resources, and help parents build the skills and confidence they need to nurture their children. Research shows that high-quality home visiting improves birth outcomes, boosts school readiness, and reduces child maltreatment and involvement in the child welfare system.

As required in H7794, Rhode Island must meet the state funding match requirements for the federal MIECHV program in order to draw down the full federal funds so that high-quality home visiting is available to all families who could benefit. Rhode Island can count certain existing, related state investments toward this match, but we have not consistently taken full advantage of that flexibility.

In recent years, Rhode Island has been one of only a small number of states that has not met the full state match and has therefore forfeited federal funds. In FFY24, Rhode Island contributed just \$56,000 dollars of the \$356,000-dollar target match



and left an estimated \$900,000 dollars in federal MIECHV funds unclaimed. In FFY26, the state has secured \$410,000 dollars toward a \$543,000-dollar match, leaving a gap of roughly \$133,000 dollars and about \$400,000 dollars in federal funds on the table.

For FFY27, Rhode Island has an opportunity to change course. The state should make the \$787,000-dollar investment needed to secure up to \$2.36 million dollars in federal matching funds—a roughly three-to-one return that would help stabilize and expand access to Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, and First Connections. This match is not included in the Governor's proposed FY27 budget, which is why passage of H7794 is essential to ensure we finally meet the full federal match and stop leaving MIECHV funds unclaimed.

We also support the strengthened reporting requirements included in H7794, which will give the General Assembly clearer information about match performance, federal dollars drawn down, and program reach over time. With better data, policymakers can help safeguard the sustainability and impact of Rhode Island's family home visiting system and ensure that state and federal resources are being fully and effectively used.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to support H7794 and to include the full \$787,000-dollar state match in the FY27 budget so Rhode Island can leverage every available federal dollar for family home visiting.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony, and for your continued efforts to support the children who are the future of our state. If you have further questions or need any additional information, please contact me at dcaprio@cfsri.org.

Sincerely, -

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Caprio", is written over the typed name.

David Caprio
President and CEO