



Children's FRIEND

Making a difference...
one child at a time.



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May 4, 2023

Chairman Louis DiPalma
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: In support of Chairman DiPalma's bill S782

Dear Chairman, DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Children's Friend writes in strong support of the Chairman's bill to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for human service programs.

As the state's oldest child-serving agency, Children's Friend has a rich 190-year history of caring for vulnerable young children in Rhode Island. As an organization that is nationally recognized for high quality programs, Children's Friend provides a full-service array of programs to over 20,000 young children and families annually, providing over 20 distinct programs geared to prevention and early interventions. The work of the foster care system – recruitment, development/training, guidance through the licensing process, placement and care coordination, completion of Home Studies, and support for both resources and birth families – is not only part of our mission-driven work, is not only part of our mission-driven work, but also an integral part of our rich history.

Rhode Island's human services system is in crisis. While the use of ARPA funds was helpful to stem the statewide staffing crisis, the crisis is not over. It is imperative that the state recognize that the current crises have been precipitated by decades of disinvestment in the child welfare system. Reimbursement rates must be increased in a permanent and sustainable way. Rates that do not cover the cost of quality care mean that providers are unable to attract and retain talented staff.

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,-

David Caprio
President and CEO