**Template for Written Testimony-Organization**

**Rhode Island General Assembly**

***Notes: Use agency logo and digital letterhead if you have it. Save your testimony as a PDF and submit via email. We recommend trying to get testimony emailed at least 2 hours before the hearing time or by 3pm if the hearing is at the Rise, but any time before or even after the hearing is appreciated!***

**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee

**From:** **Your name, your title, your organization (or just your name if you are testifying personally as a parent, teacher, etc.)**

**Date:** **March 13, 2025**

**Re:** House Bill 5861- Insurance Coverage of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors

**NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION** is one of **XX** organizations represented in the Coalition to Improve RI Maternal Care advocating to pass House Bill 5861 to require insurance coverage for the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors. The coalition is dedicated to promoting better maternal health care, including improved access to lactation support workers to provide support and education to families as they establish a breastfeeding (or chestfeeding) relationship with their infants.

Breastfeeding offers many benefits for both babies and parents. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, severe lower respiratory disease, ear infections, SIDS, and gastrointestinal infections (including vomiting and diarrhea). For pre-term infants, human milk reduces the risk of necrotizing enterocoloitis, (NEC), which can be severe and life-threatening. Breastfeeding parents have a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure.

The American Association of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for approximately 6 months after birth, and along with appropriate complementary foods as long as mutually desired by parent and child for 2 years and beyond.

[INSERT A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION SUPPORTS RHODE ISLANDERS, OR A PERSONAL STORY ABOUT HOW THIS BILL WOULD BENEFIT YOUR PATIENTS OR CLIENTS. *NOTES/TIPS*: Provide details on how these policy changes will impact the families you serve. If you have any stories (**stories are powerful**) of how licensed certified lactation counselors have helped individuals you work with or touch on the points above, please do so. If you have a relevant photo or graph/chart, include it since those catch legislators’ eyes. A picture is worth a thousand words]

**NAME OF ORGANIZATION** strongly supports House Bill 5861 and urges passage. With your leadership, we can improve health equity and improve the maternal and child health landscape in Rhode Island. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

***NOTE:* Submit this written testimony to** HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov  **\*\*AS A PDF\*\***