

Sent via email
The Honorable Frank A. Ciccone, III
Chair, Senate Labor Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

March 30, 2022

Dear Chairman Ciccone,

STATEMENT TO SUPPORT S2245 by Senator Lawson, Seveney, Coyne, Quezada, Euer, Cano, DiPalma, Ciccone, McCaffrey and Mack

The Rhode Island legislature can be proud that it was one of the earliest states to enact paid family leave for parents and caregivers when it passed the paid family leave law in 2013.

However, as more states have enacted such laws with lengthier leave provisions – up to 12 weeks in most states with such laws -- and other more generous provisions, the Rhode Island law with just 5 weeks of leave (scheduled to go to 6 weeks in 2023) has not kept pace and now has the shortest leave requirement.

In addition, the Rhode Island law which provides just 60% of wage replacement is the lowest among all paid family leave policies.

Data on the use of the Temporary Caregiver Insurance program shows that lower wage workers are the least likely to use TCI even though they make up the largest pool of workers contributing to the TDI/TCI fund. The current wage replacement of 60% may not be sufficient as it may not be enough to cover household expenses.


S2245 expands the current law in several important areas. It would:

- increase the number of weeks a worker can use from 6 to 8 weeks in 2023 and to 10 weeks in 2024, and
- expanding the category of who a worker can take time to care for to include grandchildren and siblings

In addition to these welcome changes, I would encourage you to consider progressively increasing the wage replacement provision which would assist more lower-income persons to take advantage of this benefit which they pay for as workers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the need to revise the TCI program in order for families to successfully handle home and work responsibilities. I encourage the members of the Senate Labor Committee to recommend passage of this legislation to continue to keep our state in the forefront of family-friendly policy.

Sincerely,



Maureen Maigret, Chair

Aging in Community Subcommittee, Long Term Care Coordinating Council

Policy Advisor, Senior Agenda Coalition of RI