

GENERAL ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

LATINO
POLICY INSTITUTE

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Testimony in Support of S-2202– Postpartum Health Care Bill

On behalf of the Latino Policy Institute at Roger Williams University, we strongly support the passage of the Postpartum Health Care bill (S-2202).

The United States has the highest pregnancy related mortality of any wealthy country. The high pregnancy related mortality rate is an old problem that isn't getting better. The CDC states that most pregnancy related deaths can be prevented and over half of deaths occur postpartum (within a year of giving birth.) In Rhode Island specifically, about 50% of all births are paid through Medicaid insurance, but for many comprehensive Medicaid coverage extends only through 60 days postpartum. As a state, we have a moral obligation to make a difference by extending postpartum care to 12 months with the passage of this bill.

While pregnancy related mortality is relatively high for all child bearers across the U.S, there are also significant racial disparities at play. From 2007 – 2016, for example, the mortality rate for Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people aged thirty years or greater were approximately four to five times that of their white counterparts.

Postpartum care includes recovery from childbirth, follow up on health complications, management of chronic and acute health conditions, mental health care, and access to family planning. Postpartum care saves lives. The passage of this legislation will be a pivotal first step towards making pregnancy, in Rhode Island, as safe as possible.

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