



Legislative Testimony  
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 6587, An Act Concerning  
Medicaid Coverage for Diapers**

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, Ranking Members Seminara and Case, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify in support of House Bill 6587, An Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage for Diapers.

The ACLU-CT believes in a society where all children can flourish. All children deserve to have their basic health needs met without their parents facing economic detriment. Inflation remains extraordinarily high, resulting in people needing to choose between purchasing food or diapers or delaying medical care.<sup>1</sup> Americans spend \$7.2 billion every year on disposable diapers, industry where two companies account for 70 to 80 percent of the market.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, the cost of Pampers went from \$25 for 200 to \$40 for 168, a 90 percent per unit increase.<sup>3</sup> By the next year, a box of 168 Pampers were sold at Walmart for \$60.<sup>4</sup> The rising prices of diapers will chiefly harm low-income Americans, who, because of systemic racism, are more likely to be families of color.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., M. Ayhan Kose, Franziska Ohnsorge, Jongrim Ha, *Today's Inflation and the Great Inflation of the 1970s: Similarities and Differences*, CEPR (Mar. 30, 2022), <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/todays-inflation-and-great-inflation-1970s-similarities-and-differences>; Reed Abelson, *Higher Bills Are Leading Americans to Delay Medical Care*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 16, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/16/health/inflation-delayed-health-care.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Gardner, *Why Are Diaper Prices Up 184 Percent? Two Corporations Are Preying on Parents*, MORE PERFECT UNION (June 14, 2022), <https://perfectunion.us/diaper-prices-up-inflation-collusion/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Gillian Friedman, *Diapers, Cereal and, Yes, Toilet Paper Are Going to Get More Expensive*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/29/business/consumer-goods-prices.html>.

House Bill 6587 expands Medicaid coverage to include infant and toddler diapers, which will drastically improve health, economic, and educational outcomes for families across the state. With increased access to diapers, children's health and development benefit by decreasing diseases associated with infrequent diaper changing, like urinary tract infections and diaper dermatitis. When children are able to thrive, they miss fewer days of school, and younger infants and toddlers are better able to enroll in early childhood education. When children are able to enroll in these programs, parents have more time available to work and support their families. Similarly, as the rates of certain illnesses decrease, parents miss fewer days of work to care for their children. Lessened rates of illness also in turn reduce families' overall medical costs, freeing up extra money for families to invest in their kids. Communities, too, benefit: increased enrollment in early childhood education benefits the economic health of the community while reducing the costs to Medicaid by lessening emergency department visits for illnesses related to infrequent diaper changing. At the same time, children are better prepared to succeed in school.

House Bill 6587 is a common sense piece of legislation that will directly and immediately benefit kids, families, and communities. The ACLU-CT strongly supports legislation that invests in Connecticut families, like House Bill 6587. As such, we encourage this Committee to support House Bill 6587.