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Hartford, CT 06106

**Testimony in support of:**

***HB 5368: An Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage for Diapers***

Senator Lesser, Rep. Gilchrest, Senator Seminara, Rep. Case, and members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5368, An Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage of Diapers. This bill would expand access to diapers for many families in Connecticut, thereby playing a crucial role in improving the health and well-being of babies across Connecticut.

Throughout 2023, my office convened a “Healthcare Cabinet,” which brought key policymakers, stakeholders, practitioners, and advocates together to discuss healthcare challenges facing various demographic populations across Connecticut. The cabinet was made up of subcommittees based on those population groups sought solutions to these challenges, which include potential legislation or restructuring current efforts.

Expanding access to clean diapers was a key policy priority that subcommittees identified as necessary to achieve economic independence and security for many women and their children.

Having sustainable access to diapers is critical as they decrease potential health risks for both mother and baby. According to a 2023 report from the National Diaper Bank Network, 25% of parents in Connecticut missed an average of five days of work or school in any given month because they were unable to afford the diapers required to leave their baby in childcare. The opportunity to participate in early childhood education and childcare programs is vital to a child’s development. While some parents may have access to cash assistance through other programs like SNAP, WIC, and TANF, it is often not enough to cover diaper expenses on top of other living expenses like utilities, rent, and other hygiene essentials.

In most cases, diapers and incontinence supplies are only covered for children over the age of three with medical necessity under current Medicaid provisions. This bill would expand coverage to provide diapers to babies from birth, which would positively impact the health and development of children and further support mothers in Connecticut.

Affordable and accessible healthcare for all is something that our state should continue to strive towards. This bill would play an important role in achieving that, and therefore I strongly urge passage of HB 5368.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Scanlon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" and the last name "Scanlon" written in a single continuous stroke.

Sean Scanlon  
State Comptroller