Rhode Island is a leader in providing paid family leave for families with babies, newly adopted or foster children, and seriously ill family members through the Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program. One of only 10 state based paid leave programs, TCI provides up to five weeks of partial (about 60%) wage replacement for workers who need to take time from their jobs to care for a new child or seriously ill family member. In 2023, workers will be able to take up to 6 weeks of leave, but 12 weeks is the minimum recommended leave for parents with new babies. In 2021, 7,031 workers used TCI, to either take time from work to care for a new baby (75% of claimants) or provide care for a seriously ill family member (25% of claimants).

Proposals introduced in 2022 seek to address three main problems:

**Rhode Island offers the shortest paid family leave in U.S.** Rhode Island’s TCI provides a maximum of 5 weeks of paid family leave (scheduled to increase to 6 weeks in January 2023). This is the shortest length of any paid family leave policy in the country and significantly less than the minimum 12 weeks of leave that researchers and medical professionals recommend for new parents.

**Rhode Island’s wage replacement during paid family leave is the lowest in U.S.** Rhode Island’s TCI wage replacement is currently at 60%, meaning that workers only receive up to 60% of their regular pay when on leave. This wage replacement is the lowest amongst all paid family leave policies in the country. Expenses increase significantly when a new baby or child joins a family, and families need their full paycheck to cover both their regular living expenses and to meet the needs of a baby.

**Access to Rhode Island’s paid family leave program is not equitable.** The lowest-wage workers use the TCI program at lower rates than they contribute to it. Data shows that workers with the lowest incomes, less than $20,000 per year, made up 38% of the people who contribute to the TDI/TCI fund, but only 30% of the people who file claims to take leave. With Rhode Island’s wage replacement at 60%, these workers may be unable to afford to take the paid leave they are entitled to.

Access to Rhode Island Paid Family Leave Program is not Equitable (2021)
**2022 Proposals**  
There are several bills seeking to improve Rhode Island’s paid leave program, TCI. The Campaign urges passage of these proposals and/or aligned bills sponsored by members of the General Assembly.

**Comprehensive Best Practices:** H-7444 (Cassar) would improve the program by better meeting all caregiving demands and the needs of all workers, especially those with the lower incomes. This legislation would:

- Increase the number of weeks a worker can use **from 6 to 12 weeks** in 2023
- Expand the category of who a worker can take time to care for to include grandchildren, siblings, and care recipients
- Create a **progressive wage replacement structure so that those with lower wages will receive a higher percentage of their wages while out on leave** (90% for those earning less than minimum wage; 75% for those earning twice the minimum wage)
- Expand TDI/TCP benefits to **gig workers and self-employed individuals**
- Increase the wage cap to $250,000 to fund the improvements
- Create a tax credit of $150 for those earning less than twenty-five times the minimum wage who paid into the TDI/TCI fund, but who did not receive TDI/TCI benefits
- Institute fines and penalties for not reinstating an employee to work if they use TCI

**Partial Expansions to TCI:** H-7551/S-2245 (Kazarian/Lawson) focuses on 3 improvements to TCI:

- Increase weeks **from 6 to 10 weeks** by 2024
- Increase dependent allowance from $10/week to $20/week
- Expand family definition to include grandchildren and siblings

**Improve economic equity of the TCI program:** H-7794 (Giraldo) would **require employers to co-contribute to the TDI/TCI** (as is done in MA and most other states with paid family leave) to reduce the burden borne by lower wage workers and ensure sustainability of the fund. Currently TDI and TCI are entirely funded by workers through payroll deduction.

**Update Rhode Island’s landmark 1987 Parental and Family Medical Leave Act:** H-7717/S-2243 (Giraldo/Cano) would update Rhode Island’s law, enacted six years before the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, ensuring eligible workers have unpaid leave to care for a new child or seriously ill family member. Our state law allows for up to 13 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave during any 24-month period. Federal law provides 12 weeks in any 12-month period. So, currently, eligible workers in Rhode Island can take 25 weeks over two years (13 weeks under Rhode Island law in year one and 12 weeks under federal law in year two). **Our goal is to ensure someone could take 13 weeks per year, or 26 weeks over two years, when needed to care for new babies, new foster or adopted children, and seriously ill family members.**