

## **Guide for Submitting Testimony in Support of H.B. 6937**

Thank you for taking the time to submit testimony in support of H.B. 6937, which expands Medicaid (HUSKY Health) to cover medically necessary diapers for low-income infants and toddlers. At St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church, we believe in direct acts of charity, but as Franciscan Catholics, we also recognize the importance of advocating for systemic change to uphold the dignity of life and protect vulnerable families.

This bill gives us an opportunity to put our faith into action, ensuring that no child suffers from something as preventable as diaper need, and that no mother is left without the basic resources to care for her child. The money we invest in our mothers' and children's mental health today will help prevent long-term developmental damage, reduce future healthcare needs, and lower the burden on taxpayers in the years to come.

To make it easier for you to submit testimony, we have prepared this guide, which includes:

- A brief explanation of H.B. 6937
- Three different introductions you can choose from
- A menu of reasons to include in your testimony
- Instructions on how to submit your testimony

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### **What H.B. 6937 Does**

H.B. 6937 expands Connecticut's Medicaid program (HUSKY Health) to cover the cost of medically necessary diapers for infants and toddlers in low-income families. While Medicaid already covers essential medical supplies like feeding tubes and wheelchairs, it does not currently cover diapers, even though a lack of diapers can lead to serious health issues such as:

- Urinary tract infections
- Diaper dermatitis (severe rashes and skin infections)
- Increased emergency room visits due to preventable conditions

A 2013 Yale study led by Dr. Megan Smith found that 30% of low-income mothers in New Haven experienced diaper need—the inability to afford enough diapers to keep their children clean and dry. This study also found that diaper need had a stronger effect on maternal mental health than food insecurity, making mothers twice as likely to experience stress, depression, and anxiety.

Tennessee became the first state in the country to provide Medicaid coverage for diapers in 2024, recognizing diaper need as a public health issue. Connecticut should follow suit.

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### **How to Submit Testimony**

1. Identify yourself (your name, where you live, and if applicable, that you are a member of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church).

2. Choose one of the three introductions that best reflects your perspective.
3. Select at least two reasons from the list below to explain why you support H.B. 6937.
4. Personalize your testimony—cut, paste, or add your own thoughts.
5. Submit your testimony online at:

👉 [Submit Testimony Here](#)

- Select the Bill Number: H.B. 6937
- Enter Your Contact Information
- Upload or Paste Your Testimony
- Submit Before the Public Hearing Deadline

**Public Hearing Date:** February 27, 2025

**Deadline for Written Testimony:** March 5, 2025

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### **Step 1: Greeting and Identifying Yourself**

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilcrest, and Members of the Human Services Committee,  
My name is [Your Name], and I am a [Resident of Town/Member of St. Patrick-St. Anthony  
Church in Hartford]. I submit this testimony in strong support of H.B. 6937.

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### **Step 2: Choose One of the Three Introductions**

#### **Catholic Social Teaching & Pro-Life Perspective**

As a Catholic, I believe that being pro-life means more than birth—it means ensuring that every child and family has the necessities to thrive. Expanding Medicaid to cover medically necessary diapers is a life-affirming policy that directly supports parents who have chosen life, ensuring that their children remain healthy and cared for. A budget is a moral document, and policies like H.B. 6937 reflect our collective commitment to protecting vulnerable families and upholding human dignity.

#### **Public Health & Maternal Mental Health Approach**

Diaper need is a serious public health issue that affects both babies and mothers. Research shows that when families cannot afford diapers, infants experience higher rates of infection, and mothers face increased stress, anxiety, and depression—even more than when they experience food insecurity. Addressing diaper need improves health outcomes, reduces unnecessary emergency room visits, and supports the long-term well-being of children. The investment we make today in ensuring that mothers and children have the essentials they need will prevent costly medical care and mental health crises in the future.

#### **Economic & Educational Impact Approach**

Families in Connecticut are struggling. Parents in the lowest income bracket spend up to 14% of their post-tax income on diapers, forcing them to make impossible choices—buy diapers or pay rent, keep their job or stay home because daycare requires diapers they cannot afford. If we ignore this issue now, we will pay for it later, as children who grow up in stressful, resource-deprived environments require additional educational and healthcare resources. By ensuring that all children have a healthy start, we reduce future costs in special education, healthcare, and social services.

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### **Step 3: Pick at Least Two Reasons to Support H.B. 6937**

#### **Health & Well-Being**

- Infants without enough diapers experience higher rates of diaper rash, infections, and hospital visits.
- Pediatricians recommend frequent diaper changes, but parents experiencing diaper need are forced to leave infants in soiled diapers longer than is safe.

#### **Maternal Mental Health**

- The Yale study found that diaper need has a stronger effect on maternal mental health than food insecurity, doubling rates of stress, depression, and anxiety among mothers.
- Improving access to diapers means healthier, more stable families, reducing the need for costly mental health interventions down the road.

#### **Economic Stability & Workforce Participation**

- Many daycare centers require parents to provide diapers; without them, parents cannot go to work, further deepening poverty.
- Expanding Medicaid to cover diapers would allow parents to stay employed, provide for their families, and break cycles of poverty.

#### **Long-Term Child Development & Education**

- The first two years of life are critical for brain development and emotional bonding between parent and child. Chronic stress from diaper need affects a child's long-term health, behavior, and educational outcomes.
- Investing in early childhood health and stability now reduces long-term costs in education and social services. The money we invest in early childhood health today will prevent increased demand for taxpayer-funded services in the future.

#### **Connecticut Should Follow Tennessee's Lead**

- In 2024, Tennessee became the first state to provide Medicaid coverage for diapers through its TennCare program, ensuring that low-income families receive 100 diapers per month at no cost.
  - If Tennessee can do this, Connecticut can and should follow suit.
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## Step 4: Conclusion

We have an obligation to ensure that no child suffers from something as preventable as diaper need, and no parent carries this burden alone. Connecticut can and should take the next step in addressing this crisis.

I urge you to support H.B. 6937 and ensure that families receiving Medicaid have access to medically necessary diapers, just as they do for other essential healthcare needs. The investment we make in our children today will reduce the need for costly interventions in the future, strengthening both families and our economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Affiliation – Optional]

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## Final Steps: Submit Your Testimony

- Submit online at: [Connecticut General Assembly Testimony Submission](#)
- Select: H.B. 6937
- **Deadline:** March 5, 2025

Your voice can make a difference. Thank you for standing with families in need.