

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Rhode Island Chapter

Testimony in Opposition to H-6171
House Judiciary Committee
Chairman Robert E. Craven, Sr.

April 12, 2021

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics would like to express its opposition to House Bill 6171, the Protection of Youth with Variations in Physical Sex Characteristics Act. While its intentions may be good, we are concerned that the bill, as written, would negatively impact the care of the children of Rhode Island, including those children that it is intended to protect.

H-6171 specifies a very broad range of prohibited surgeries which goes well beyond those related to intersex children. Primary care physicians routinely see cases of hypospadias and other urogenital malformations that have no relationship to intersex conditions at all. Early surgical correction of these conditions before the age of 12 is warranted to minimize health risks and improve long term sexual and urinary function. The inability of local pediatric urologists to perform such surgeries would diminish the quality of care that we can provide to the children of Rhode Island.

In addition to limiting the ability of Rhode Island pediatric urologists to perform many indicated surgeries, H-6171 also allows for disciplinary action and civil liability for doing so. We are concerned that these provisions could further affect access of Rhode Island children to needed urologic services, as current providers may choose to limit surgical options as a result. Furthermore, such a restrictive law with disciplinary and financial risks might limit our ability to recruit high quality pediatric urologists to our state in the future.

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to the health and wellbeing of all Rhode Island children, including those that are intersex. We will continue to work with our partners in pediatric urology, pediatric endocrinology, and members of the intersex community to move this dialog further along to ensure that the needs of each child and family are met, and that appropriate care is provided in all cases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Fox".

Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP
President
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
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