



To: Representative Stephen Casey, Chair of the House Committee on Health and Human Services

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Nicole Jellinek, Chair, Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

Date: March 1, 2021

Re: **Support for House Bill 5370: RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- CONFIDENTIALITY OF HEALTH CARE COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ACT**

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

I write to express the support of the RI Coalition for Reproductive Freedom (RICRF) for **House Bill 5370: RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- CONFIDENTIALITY OF HEALTH CARE COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ACT**.

RICRF is a Coalition comprised of 17 organizations working together to share resources, build strategies and coordinate efforts to connect reproductive freedom with social and economic justice. We focus on advocacy and legislative action to enact change.

We offer this letter as support to ensure that health care communications have full protections of privacy and confidentiality.

From the perspective of a Coalition focused on reproductive freedom, lack of confidentiality regarding explanation of benefits (EOBs) and additional healthcare communications essentially makes it impossible for dependents (often minors and young adults) to obtain the confidential access to sexual and reproductive health care they need. Practically this means lack of regular wellness care, lack of access to contraception, lack of treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and lack of access to legal abortion services. This current lack of confidentiality has additional repercussions for those in domestic violence relationships in which the abuser is the insurance policyholder and the survivor is the "dependent."

We strongly encourage you to vote to pass this important legislation, thus protecting access to reproductive services for all who seek them and who expect their treatment to remain confidential. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.



Nicole Jellinek, Chair, Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom partners include:

American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island
American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
Catholics for Choice
Hope and Change for Haiti
Humanists of Rhode Island
League of Women Voters, RI
Medical Students for Choice
National Council of Jewish Women, RI Section
Perinatal Quality Collaborative

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Rhode Island Working Families Party
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence
RI National Association of Social Workers
RI National Organization for Women
RI Religious Coalition for Reproductive Freedom
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Health and Education Fund