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From: careohleen@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 3:00 PM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: Testimony in Support of/Opposition to House Bill No. 5688

House Education Committee
Room 101 - State House
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St, Providence, RI 02903
3/38/2023

Testimony in Support of/Opposition to House Bill No. 5688

Dear Chairperson McNamara and members of the House Education Committee:

I am Caroline Dyhrberg, and I am a voting resident of Providence and House District 8.

I oppose House bill 5688, titled “An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Parents Bill of Rights Act”.

I vehemently oppose bill 5688 because it will lead to a spike in mental health crises for young people under 18, especially for LGBTQ youth, and especially for gender diverse youth. According to recent data from the Trevor Project (see https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/assets/static/trevor01_2022survey_final.pdf for more information), when LGBTQ youth are in communities that do not support them, their mental health significantly decreases, including an increase in rates of deaths caused by suicide. This is alarming, and sits very close to my heart, as someone who has had many mental health challenges throughout their 26 years of life, and who often isn't sure who they can trust to be their authentic self. Being forced to lie about who I am just because some people don't believe I have the right to healthcare or the right to live makes me want to die. If you pass this bill, which will force schools to effectively eliminate privacy rights of minors, we will see an increase in crisis hospitalizations and in deaths. Since Rhode Island is already in a statewide behavioral health crisis with extensive waiting lists for both inpatient and outpatient care, this bill would add more logs to the flame.

For these reasons, I urge you all to please vote against bill 5688.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak against bill 5688.

Sincerely,

Caroline Dyhrberg

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House District 8