



April 10, 2024

The Honorable Joseph McNamara  
House Education Committee

To Chair McNamara and members of the committee,  
My name is Jaye Watts, I am a licensed independent clinical social worker  
and the director of the Trans Health Program at Thundermist Health Center. I  
am here in opposition to H7781.

Thundermist is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center with  
locations in Woonsocket, West Warwick, and South County. Thundermist  
serves over 62,000 people, that's 1 in 18 Rhode Islanders, with patients who  
come from every zip code in our state. In 2015, Thundermist became the first  
in Rhode Island to establish a dedicated program for Trans Health that  
presently serves over 2,000 people.

This bill is part of a wave of model legislation sweeping the country targeting  
education about and inclusion of LGBTQ identities under the guise of  
"parents rights". The groups pushing this type of legislation have particularly  
close ties to extreme national movements aiming to limit the existence of  
transgender people from public life.

Of particular concern, are the broad references to education and healthcare  
and consent for medical care that will create confusion for both educators and  
health care providers alike. We already have laws that address this. This is not  
about Rhode Island. It is about a strange new political agenda targeting the  
transgender community.

Rhode Island has a reputation of being a safe and inclusive state that protects  
and affirms the dignity and rights of all, including our LGBTQ+ community.  
This reputation makes us both a beacon for those seeking refuge and a target  
for those who seek to tear those rights away.  
I urge you to be the beacon and quickly reject this bill.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaye Watts".

Jaye Watts, LICSW

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