

Chris O'Brien

From: Ellie Brown <ellie@elliebrown.com>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 5:28 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony in support for H7255

Dear Chair Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Ellie Brown, and I reside in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. As the Development Director at BII, an organization dedicated to closing the racial wealth gap in New England, I am testifying in support of House Bill 7255 (Rep Alzate) regarding contraception coverage.

The issue of birth control accessibility is deeply personal to me. When I was on Medicaid, I experienced firsthand how crucial it is to have comprehensive coverage for contraceptives. I could have a Mirena implemented and removed when it migrated, potentially causing major problems, at no cost to me. This not only ensured my reproductive health but also prevented potential financial strain from medical expenses.

Access to affordable birth control is not just a reproductive freedom issue; it is an economic justice issue. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been pivotal in improving access to contraceptives for millions of women, mitigating the financial barrier that often hinders contraceptive use. The no-cost provision has allowed individuals to choose the most suitable method without financial constraints.

House Bill 7255 seeks to build upon the ACA's achievements by mandating coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods, limiting insurer restrictions, and ensuring accessibility to over-the-counter contraceptives without a prescription. It also includes provisions for alternative therapies for those requiring them, enhancing comprehensive reproductive care.

This bill is vital for Rhode Islanders as it preserves affordable access to contraception, protects against potential legal challenges to ACA provisions, and reinforces the importance of preventive reproductive care as basic health care. Everyone deserves access to the contraceptive method that best suits their needs, without financial barriers or insurer restrictions.

I urge you to support House Bill 7255 to safeguard this critical health insurance benefit, ensure equitable access to birth control, and uphold reproductive and economic justice in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellie Brown
21 Whipple St. Pawtucket, RI 02860

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