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A-W Providence, RI 02906

Hearing May 15, 2024

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering the testimony of the LWVRI

The League of Women Voters of RI supports H7255 RELATING TO INSURANCE – ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES (requires every individual or group health insurance contract effective on or after January 1, 2025, to provide coverage to insured and the insured's spouse and dependents for all F.D.A. approved prescription contraceptive drugs, devices and other products.

This bill updates the Rhode Island state law that mandates the coverage of contraception enacted in 2000 in accordance with the federal Affordable Care Act. It requires insurance coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and methods and over the counter contraceptives without a prescription. It, also, includes counseling and other related services.

Preventive reproductive care including birth control is basic health care. In 2014, the RI Department of Health presented the RI pregnancy risk assessment monitoring system data book which was evidence based. The overall prevalence of unintended pregnancies was 38.2% The reasons for not using birth control included 6.8% had problems getting birth control when they needed it and 11.5% had side effects with the birth control method that they were using. 53.5% had public health insurance and 53.4% were on WIC. 78% were under 20yo, 56% had <12 years of education, 78% were black, 58% were Hispanic and 59% were unmarried. With the cost of raising 1 toddler and 1 school aged child per family in RI cost between \$66,000 and \$74,000 per year in 2022, this coverage of preventative reproductive care would benefit everyone. The cost of preventative reproductive care affects all women especially young women and women of limited means. They should not have to endure the burden and consequences of deciding if they can afford birth control.

By providing readily accessible methods, non-cost OTC contraception, counseling and alternative therapies, women are able to decide their futures and dreams.

The LWVRI is in partnership with The RI Coalition for Reproductive Freedom in asking for your support of this bill.

Thank you,  
Sandra Johnson 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President LWVRI  
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