

Testimony in Support of H 5771
Submitted to the House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, April 30

Dear Chair Abney and distinguished members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Payton Wozny. I am from Wakefield and will be graduating from the University of Rhode Island this May.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 5771 (Rep. Alzate), which would expand Medicaid coverage to include fertility health care. Fertility care is essential for building families, yet today in Rhode Island, individuals on Medicaid have no coverage for fertility treatments. This bill will correct that inequity by aligning our state's standards with the updated medical definitions of infertility, ensuring LGBTQ+ individuals, single people, and all those wishing to build a family have access to the care they need.

Access to fertility health care is deeply personal to me, as I am a product of IVF. My parents were fortunate enough to become parents through support from family to manage the costs of IVF, but this is not realistic for everyone. My brother and I have been a fantastic addition to our family, changing our parents' lives forever. No one should be denied the ability to have children because of their income or insurance type.

Currently, Medicaid recipients are entirely excluded from fertility care coverage. This means that young adults undergoing cancer treatment, individuals with medical conditions like endometriosis, or couples facing unexplained infertility are left without options. Paying out-of-pocket for procedures like IVF is financially impossible for many, especially those already facing economic hardships. This is not just a health care issue—it is an issue of reproductive justice, health equity, and basic human dignity.

Studies show that about 9% of men and 12.1% of women of reproductive age in the U.S. experience fertility challenges. Yet, Black women, who already experience systemic health disparities, are almost twice as likely to suffer from infertility and half as likely to access care compared to white women. H 5771 takes a meaningful step toward correcting this injustice and ensuring that all Rhode Islanders have a fair opportunity to grow their families.

With reproductive rights under attack across the country, Rhode Island must lead in affirming the fundamental right to decide if, when, and how to have children. Passing H 5771 is a critical and compassionate move toward protecting and expanding reproductive and economic justice in our state.

I urge you to vote favorably for H 5771 to ensure fertility health care is accessible to all Rhode Islanders, regardless of income or insurance status.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Payton Wozny
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