



Memo To: House Finance Committee
From: Kelly Nevins, CEO, Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Date: March 20, 2026
Regards: H 7127, Article 1 Section 1 by Representative Marvin Abney (AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2027 (MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2027)

Women's Fund of Rhode Island invests in women and girls through research, advocacy, grantmaking, and strategic partnerships designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change. We serve alongside Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) on the Coalition for Reproductive Freedom and the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition. We are in strong support of the proposed one-time \$600,000 allocation for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) included in Article 1, Section 1 of the FY 2027 budget.

This funding is urgently needed to backfill federal Medicaid reimbursement that PPSNE can no longer access due to the "defund" provision in H.R. 1. Despite this loss, PPSNE has continued to provide essential preventive care, including cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, birth control, and routine exams, to Medicaid patients across Rhode Island. This allocation ensures that patients are not penalized for a federal policy decision that restricts access to care from a trusted provider.

At the same time, we are operating in an increasingly unstable federal health policy environment. Ongoing threats to the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid, including coverage rollbacks, administrative barriers, and affordability challenges, are already contributing to gaps in coverage and access. As our [Women's Well-Being Index](#) shows, even in a state like Rhode Island with relatively strong insurance coverage rates, insurance alone does not guarantee care. Structural barriers, underinsurance, and provider access continue to limit whether individuals can actually receive timely, preventive services .

When federal policies both restrict coverage and target specific providers, the impact is compounded. PPSNE is a critical part of Rhode Island's health care safety net, serving nearly 10,000 patients annually, many of whom rely on Medicaid. For many patients, particularly women, people of color, and those with low incomes, PPSNE is not just one option among many; it is their most accessible and trusted source of care.

Preventive care is one of the most cost-effective investments we can make. When patients lose access to contraception, cancer screenings, and STI prevention, the long-term health and fiscal costs increase, for individuals, families, and the state.

This moment calls for state leadership. As federal actions destabilize both coverage and care delivery, Rhode Island has the opportunity, and responsibility, to ensure continuity of services for those who need them most. Other states have already taken action to stabilize access; Rhode Island should do the same.

Health care is foundational to economic security, bodily autonomy, and overall well-being. Ensuring continued access to preventive care through PPSNE is not only a health issue, it is a matter of equity and justice.

We respectfully urge you to support the inclusion of this \$600,000 allocation in the FY 2027 budget to protect access to essential preventive health services for Rhode Islanders.

About Women's Fund of Rhode Island

For over 25 years, Women's Fund of Rhode Island has worked to build a Rhode Island where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We advance gender equity through research, policy advocacy, leadership training, and community investment. Our work has informed major legislative victories, including paid family leave expansion, fair pay protections, and equitable access to reproductive health care. We have trained thousands of leaders and invested over \$1.5 million in local organizations driving change. Learn more at www.wfri.org.