

Dear Chair Tanzi and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Human Services:

My name is Janet Lefkowitz, I live and work in Rhode Island. I am a practicing OBGYN physician at Women and Infants Hospital, am on Faculty at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. I also provide reproductive health care at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England clinics.

I am testifying in strong support of the proposed one-time budget allocation of \$600,000 for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) contained in Article 1, Section 1 for EOHHS of the proposed FY 2027 budget (H 7127). This funding will cover the cost of preventive care such as cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, birth control, and other essential health care for patients who are now blocked from using their Medicaid insurance at PPSNE due to the “defund” provision in the federal H.R.1 law passed in July 2025. PPSNE is a safety net provider serving nearly 10,000 patients last year in Rhode Island. My patients are counting on the state to step in and backfill the blocked federal funding so PPSNE can continue to serve patients who need care now and in the future.

In September 2025, the first month the “defund” law was enforceable, Planned Parenthood health centers provided more than 100,000 visits to patients who use Medicaid. To shield patients from bearing the harm of this unconstitutional law, Planned Parenthood health centers covered the costs of care provided for an overwhelming majority of their patients who use Medicaid, an estimated \$45 million in care. State leaders have taken action to stabilize services and help protect access to care for patients who need it. Twelve states—including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and Washington—have allocated millions in funding to maintain access to care for their Medicaid enrollees.

Like any other health care provider, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is reimbursed for services their health centers provide to patients who rely on public health programs like Medicaid. Now, because of H.R. 1 which unconstitutionally “defunds” Planned Parenthood, Planned Parenthood health centers can’t be reimbursed for preventive services they provide, impacting 1.1 million patients nationwide who are served by Planned Parenthood and have Medicaid as their insurance coverage.

Planned Parenthood health centers have an indispensable role in our health care system. For many communities, Planned Parenthood health centers are the sole provider of sexual and reproductive health care. One in three women has been to a Planned Parenthood health center for care. Nearly 10,000 patients visited PPSNE for care at the Providence health center and through telehealth in FY 25, and 24% percent, over 2300, of those patients were insured by Medicaid to cover their services.

Nearly half of PPSNE patients in Rhode Island identify as people of color (23% Hispanic, 13% Black, 3% more than one race, 3% Asian, 39% white, 19% other/unknown), 89% of patients identify as women, and 90% of patients are 20 years old or older.

In just eight months since President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill into law, 23 Planned Parenthood health centers have been forced to permanently close, leaving thousands of patients with fewer options, higher costs, and less freedom to make decisions about their health.

All people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, because health care is a human right.

Access to reproductive health care remains vulnerable here in Rhode Island. I support the budget allocation in H 7127 because all Rhode Islanders should have the right to visit their trusted provider for the health care they need. I urge the committee to support the proposed \$600,000 to Planned Parenthood of Southern New England in the FY 2027 budget to ensure the necessary state funding for preventive health services and to protect patients' access to care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Janet Lefkowitz

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