

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

My name is Julia McDowell, and I am from Providence, Rhode Island. I am testifying in strong support of the proposed \$600,000 budget allocation for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England in the FY 2027 budget.

I believe reproductive rights must be respected not just in concept, but in practice. Rights only exist if people can actually access care. That means services must be funded, clinics must stay open, and care must be available to patients with Medicaid and limited financial means.

My own life is a direct example of why this matters. Having control over my own body and my reproductive decisions allowed me to pursue my education, build a meaningful and demanding career, and also have a rich family life. The ability to decide if and when to have children shaped the entire course of my life. I would want that same freedom and opportunity for every person in Rhode Island.

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is a trusted provider for thousands of Rhode Islanders, and this funding is about ensuring that Rhode Islanders can actually access the full range of reproductive health care services they provide, including contraception, cancer screenings, STI testing, and abortion care. When patients with Medicaid and limited financial means are blocked from using their insurance at Planned Parenthood because of federal action, they don't stop needing care — they just lose access to it. The state has the ability and the responsibility to ensure that these Rhode Islanders can still see their provider and make their own decisions about their health and their futures.

This bill is about making sure rights exist in practice, not just on paper. I urge you to support this funding to protect access to care for Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Julia McDowell

3 Catalpa Rd

Providence, Rhode Island 02906