

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

My name is Lisa Vura-Weis, and I am a Cranston resident. I am a Board member for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and have worked in health policy for most of my career, including as Acting Secretary of EOHHS in 2019.

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. 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.

This issue is important to me because I care deeply about health care access and affordability in Rhode Island. Too many Rhode Islanders face barriers to care - PPSNE provides critical comprehensive healthcare services, including reproductive health care, to over 10,000 patients in Rhode Island per year. 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 reproductive health care.

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's "defund" provision, 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. Thousands of those patients are our neighbors here in Rhode Island.

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 the defund provision, 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.

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.

Sincerely,

Lisa Vura-Weis

Cranston, RI