

April 8, 2024

From Sydney Loiselle, LICSW, C-ACYFSW  
In opposition to H7884

Dear Chair Donovan, First Vice Chair Giraldo, Second Vice Chair Potter, and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 7884. My name is Syd Loiselle (pronouns they/them) and I am a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in Rhode Island and a member of the RI NASW's Policy and Advocacy Committee. In my clinical roles, I provide care to young people ages 4 to 25, primarily those who are trans and gender diverse. In addition to my professional experiences, I myself am a LGBTQ+ individual living in and accessing health care in Rhode Island.

This proposed bill introduced in the Rhode Island State House is built on model legislation from extremist ideological groups seeking to use the government to impose their views on everyone. Banning access to legal, life-saving medical care that is supported by every major U.S. medical association - representing 1.3 million doctors- as safe, effective, standard-of-care medicine is dangerous and harmful to everyone in the Ocean State.

The arguments used to push forward these harmful measures aren't new. Opponents are evoking the same kinds of disinformation used against LGBTQ+ people from the 1970s through the Supreme Court decision settling marriage equality. Significantly, what has changed is their target. The groups opposing LGBTQ+ people's visibility in public life are now targeting the trans community, and especially young transgender people, for bullying, harassment, and intimidation. As in the past, those pushing harmful policies claim their interest is in "protecting the children," but they use their platforms to do the exact opposite.

Rhode Island protected transgender people under the law more than 20 years ago, recognizing that as the necessary first step to end the mistreatment too often experienced by the community. Nearly a decade has passed since our schools implemented policies to support transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse students. We should be well beyond debates about transgender Rhode Islanders' basic dignity and humanity and respect for their ability to live, work, go to school and participate in public life on the same terms as everyone else.

This bill is not only unnecessary, but harmful. It is meant to create chaos, confusion, and exclusion. It is my greatest privilege to work with the gender diverse youth of Rhode Island. In order to protect this vulnerable population, I strongly oppose H7884 and urge the committee to reject this damaging bill.

Thank you for your time and your work on behalf of all people in the state of Rhode Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydney Loiselle, LICSW  
Providence, RI  
[sydneyloiselle23@gmail.com](mailto:sydneyloiselle23@gmail.com)