

Testimony in Opposition of HB 7884 - Restriction on Transgender Healthcare for Minors

House Health & Human Services Committee

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The Economic Progress Institute strongly opposes Representative Morgan's HB 7884, which prohibits gender transition procedures for all minors, uses of public funds for that purpose, and establishes discipline for health care providers for providing the same. It also establishes a 30-year statute of limitations and a right to a civil action for civil damages.

Rhode Island has a proud history of recognizing and affirming the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. Since 1995, Rhode Island law has outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation. In May 2001, Rhode Island became the second state in the nation to ban discrimination based on gender identity or expression in employment, credit, housing and public accommodations¹. RI also ranks as one of the most inclusive states in the country for members of LGBTQIA+². However, Representative Morgan's HB 7884 aims to put this legacy and members of the LGBTQIA+ community at risk. If implemented, HB 7884 would ban essential medical care for transgender youth. Gender-affirming care is a supportive form of healthcare. It consists of an array of services that may include medical, surgical, mental health, and non-medical services for transgender and nonbinary people. According to professional health associations such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Endocrine Society, gender-affirming care is safe, effective, and medically *necessary*.³ On average, individuals who receive medical and psychosocial gender-affirming care experience lower rates of adverse health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Prohibiting medical support can result in increased chances of depression and anxiety, or worse, suicide.⁴ Considering approximately 82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide – with suicidality highest among transgender youth – it is imperative that we do not restrict access to lifesaving medical care.⁵

Far from protecting children, this bill will needlessly endanger Rhode Island's youth by eliminating essential care for minors. Furthermore, it is deeply rooted in homophobia and

¹ <https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2023-06/Guidance-Rhode-Island-Schools-Transgender-Gender-Nonconforming-Students.pdf>

² <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2022/06/01/best-worst-us-states-lgbtq-gay-inclusiveness-pride-month-2022/7454218001/>

³ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/bans-trans-youth-health-care/>

⁴ <https://opa.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/gender-affirming-care-young-people-march-2022.pdf>

⁵ [Suicidality Among Transgender Youth: Elucidating the Role of Interpersonal Risk Factors - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35444444/)

transphobia, which are not representative of Rhode Island's values. We ask the committee to vote against this proposal.