

Thundermist!

HEALTH CENTER

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan
House Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Thank you, chairperson Donovan and members of the committee. My name is Ryan Fontaine. I am proud to testify on behalf of Thundermist Health Center in strong opposition to H 7884.

Thundermist is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center with locations in Woonsocket, West Warwick, and South County. Thundermist serves over 62,000 people, that's 1 in 18 Rhode Islanders, with patients who come from every zip code in our state. In 2015, Thundermist became the first in Rhode Island to establish a dedicated program for Trans Health that presently serves over 2,000 people.

We are here for Thundermist today to fulfill our mission to improve the health of our patients and communities by delivering exceptional health care, removing barriers to that care, and advancing healthy lifestyles.

The bill presented to you is based on incorrect information and a lack of understanding about the needs and experiences of transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse people. Healthcare bans like this one are dangerous political attacks that would prevent parents from getting their child the healthcare they need -- healthcare supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and other leading medical authorities in the U.S. representing 1.3 million doctors.

As healthcare professionals, we see firsthand what is supported by the evidence; transgender youth are able to thrive when they can receive the healthcare they need. Not only do we understand this from our patients' experience, but many of us also understand from our own

WOONSOCKET

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WEST WARWICK

Medical

186 Providence St.
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Dental

5 Washington St.
West Warwick, RI 02893

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SOUTH COUNTY

Medical & Dental

1 River St.
Wakefield, RI 02879

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Dental Phone: 401-783-5646

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experience. I remember what it was like before there was access to even basic culturally competent care as a trans person. Rhode Island has made so much progress in the past 10 years building a strong system of care for all trans people, including young people and their families. We urge you to reject H7884 as harmful legislation and focus on bills that strengthen our health care system and protect patient access.

Sincerely,

Ryan Fontaine
Trans Health Education and Policy Specialist