

Steven Sepe

From: Alli Mitchell <allijoritts@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 1:25 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: Testimony in support for H 5629

Dear Chair Donovan and distinguished members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Allison Mitchell, I am from Barrington. I am a former IVF patient, mother, and passionate defender of people's access to reproductive healthcare.

I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5629 (Rep. Alzate). This bill will improve access to family building health care by aligning fertility health care insurance coverage with the medical standard of care, which clearly includes LGBTQ+ and single people, among others, so more Rhode Island residents have the opportunity to build their family. Fertility health care is essential for building families.

At age 37, after trying for a year to conceive a child naturally, my husband and I consulted a fertility specialist and I was diagnosed with Diminished Ovarian Reserve. This began what would be the longest, most painful, and yet most rewarding journey of my life. Being a mother was someone I had always wanted to be, someone I assumed I would be, someone I simply could not imagine not being. Suddenly, I was forced to imagine a reality where I was not a mom. A reality I believed in and took for granted for 37 years was suddenly flipped upside down and seemingly beyond reach. It's not easy to explain the feeling, to help people understand how it feels to lose something you never had, to want something so badly that it becomes a depressing, debilitating, and all-consuming obsession. Access to quality fertility care, grief counseling, and IVF doctors and nurses changed (and possibly saved) my life.

After our first round of IVF I became pregnant and we were ecstatic, but little did we know that it was only the beginning of what would be a very long and difficult journey. Sadly we suffered a second trimester loss in December of 2016 due to a rare genetic disorder. We were determined to carry on and after 8 rounds of IVF, 2 miscarriages, thousands of shots, hundreds of doctors visits, and the determination of a woman on a mission, I gave birth to a healthy daughter in 2018 and a healthy son in 2021. The waiting, the disappointment, and the recurring loss were almost more than I could manage. With the love of my family and access to grief counseling, IVF doctors, nurses, and therapy, we made it through.

Without access to these services and insurance coverage, we would not have a family. I support the expansion of access by broadening the definition of "infertility" to include single individuals and LGBTQ+ families. Every person should have access to the care they need, including fertility health care, to decide if, when, and how they have children and build their families. With the current hostile political landscape for reproductive health, our state must do everything we can to stand for the fundamental right for people to be able to decide whether, when, and how to have children. I urge the committee and legislature to vote favorably for H 5629 to improve fertility health care coverage and update our state law, which is outdated and doesn't reflect the standard of health care, so more Rhode Island residents have access to the essential medical care they need to build their families.

Thank you for hearing my story and for your time and consideration.

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