

Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

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

My name is Emily Neel, and I live in Providence, where I am attending medical school.

I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5629 (Rep. Alzate). This bill will improve access to family-building healthcare by aligning fertility coverage with the medical standard of care, which includes LGBTQ+ individuals and single people. This will ensure more Rhode Island residents can pursue their family-building goals. Fertility healthcare is essential for families, and access to it should not be limited by identity or financial barriers.

The topic of access to fertility is near and dear to me both personally and professionally. My partner and I are hoping to have children in the next few years. As two women, we will require the support of fertility treatment to do so. However, both my partner and I are students or have significant amounts of student loans. The possibility of building our family in the way we envision, which requires in vitro fertilization, feels daunting, if not impossible due to the out-of-pocket costs associated. HB 5629 would make it possible for us to begin this journey of building a family together.

Access to fertility care is not just a concern for queer individuals; many people, regardless of identity, need assistance to start a family. As a future physician, I know I will encounter patients facing infertility, and I want to ensure they have the support they need.

HB 5629 is an urgent reproductive and economic justice issue. All people, regardless of identity or income, should have the right to build their families. In light of the current political climate around reproductive health, it is critical that Rhode Island lead by supporting the right to decide when, whether, and how to have children.

I urge the committee and legislature to support HB 5629 to update our state's outdated laws, improve fertility healthcare coverage, and ensure that all Rhode Islanders can access the care they need to build their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily Neel
305 Dudley St, Providence, RI