

Chair Susan Donovan and RI Health and Human Services Committee
Re: support for H 6368

Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 6368, legislation that aims to prohibit discrimination in health care based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, or disability. I urge this committee to vote in favor of this important measure that affirms Rhode Island's commitment to fairness, dignity, and equal treatment in our health care system.

Discrimination in health care is not just a moral failing—it has real, measurable consequences for health outcomes. Numerous studies have demonstrated that marginalized populations face barriers to accessing care, receive lower-quality treatment, and suffer worse health outcomes due to bias, both implicit and overt, within our health care systems. H 6368 provides crucial legal clarity that such discrimination will not be tolerated in Rhode Island.

As we have seen in recent years, health care protections at the federal level can be volatile. H 6368 ensures our state remains steadfast in defending the rights of all people to access care without prejudice.

This bill is especially important for our LGBTQ+ community, communities of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, and older adults—many of whom have long been underserved or mistreated within the medical system. It sends a clear message: in Rhode Island, health care must be a place of healing, not harm.

I thank Chairwoman Donovan and the members of this committee for considering this testimony and for your commitment to building an inclusive and just health care system. I respectfully urge you to support H 6368 and help ensure that no one in Rhode Island is denied care or treated unfairly because of who they are.

Sincerely,

Wendy Becker, PhD, LICSW