



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support of H5250

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the HHS Committee:

The Rhode Island Chapter of the National Organization for Women (RI NOW) writes today in support of H5250, which creates a commission to study the impact of commercial sexual activity in the context of decriminalization.

A person who is engaged in sex industry work should not be exploited and suffer violence at the hands of their clients or law enforcement. Those who do this work are disproportionately from marginalized groups like poor women, trans people, and Black and brown people. We should not compound discrimination.

The establishment of this commission addresses the critical need to examine and bring together evidence to create/inform policies that protect sex workers' safety. We look forward to a balanced study on the health and safety impact on the state's commercial sexual activity laws, which will help to create a safer and regulated environment for sex workers.

We thank you for your consideration on H5250 and we urge you to support this common sense legislation.

Hilary Levey Friedman, PhD
President of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Women

Rhode Island National Organization for Women (RI NOW) is a membership-based advocacy organization with hundreds of members and supporters throughout the state of Rhode Island. We believe that anyone who identifies as a woman deserves equality and equity in political, social, and economic arenas.