

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bills H 7370, 7529, 7375**

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**Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**

**Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee**

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Chair Craven and honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's **strong opposition to three anti-abortion bills being heard today: 7370, 7529, 7375**. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) provided sexual and reproductive health care to over 7,000 Rhode Island patients last year. We believe all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

Here is the truth about abortion: abortion care is health care, abortion is normal, abortion is part of reproductive health care, it is one of the safest medical procedures. In the United States, abortion has a safety record of over 99%. Nearly a fourth of women in America will have an abortion by age 45. Yet despite the facts of this basic health care procedure, abortion rights affirmed by *Roe v. Wade* 50 years ago were stolen from us in June of 2022 by the United States Supreme Court. Thankfully, abortion is still legal in Rhode Island. Yet we know legality has never guaranteed access for all people. Even in our own state, hurdles like distance, money, time off work, and other restrictions have stood in the way of people's health despite having the legal right.

Every decision about pregnancy is deeply personal regardless of the pregnancy outcome – and every person deserves the right to make their own decision about their pregnancy with respect, free from shame and stigma, and without political interference. Legislators pushing these bills have one goal: continuing to attack our rights and freedoms. The General Assembly's focus should be on addressing existing barriers to improve access to care and protecting health care providers instead of pushing these bills which would only create additional barriers for people who need to access time sensitive and safe, legal abortion care.

**H 7370 Criminal Offenses- Children, H 7529 Born-Alive Infant Protection Act**, are bills that are unnecessary and advance gross mischaracterizations that have no factual basis in medical science and represent a dangerous attempt to restrict access to safe and legal abortion. The true aim of these bills is not based in science or in health care; instead, they are meant to shame and stigmatize doctors who provide abortions and patients who need access to essential, time sensitive, safe, and legal abortion care. What we know is doctors already have an obligation to provide appropriate medical care and adhere to state laws and regulations and to suggest otherwise is false, offensive, and dangerous. (See: [R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-9-18](#)) This dangerous legislation is aimed squarely at limiting access to abortion care and interfering in the doctor-patient relationship.

**H 7375 Procedure in Particular Actions- Death by Wrongful Death** would allow wrongful death suits for the "death of a child in utero" at any stage of pregnancy and undermine the reproductive rights and autonomy of pregnant people in this state. The loss of a wanted pregnancy is tragic, especially when it could have been prevented. However, patients can already sue their doctors under medical malpractice laws if the doctor's negligence caused a miscarriage. This bill could also allow

abusers to use the judicial system to attack and penalize pregnant people for exercising their right to an abortion, or for a pregnancy loss. No person should ever fear investigation or judicial action when facing a pregnancy loss. Wrongful death bills like H7375 will not deter doctors from negligent actions -- medical malpractice laws already exist for that purpose. These bills could, however, have a chilling effect on doctors' willingness to treat patients with risky pregnancies or with complications arising from pregnancy and to provide abortion care. So-called personhood laws, like this bill, were first passed in an effort to limit abortion, but they don't stop there. As the Alabama Supreme Court decision makes clear, attacks on abortion cause ripples that harm all manner of reproductive health care — including IVF and even birth control. Bills like this are aiming to take away our reproductive freedom.

With reproductive rights and abortion access under constant attack across the country, the General Assembly should be focusing their attention on bills such as the Health Care Provider Shield Act (H7577) to protect health care providers delivering legal standard of care in our state, and not trying to further criminalize abortion care. **That is why we strongly urge this committee to vote no on H 7370, H 7529, and H7375.** These bills are a blatant attempt to undermine individuals' right to abortion and goes against the belief of 70% of Rhode Islanders who think abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Abortion is a deeply personal decision and should always be made by the patient in consultation with their health care provider, family, and other individuals they trust- not politicians. Politicians should not be involved in a person's private medical decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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