

Testimony in Support of H7577 & in Opposition to H7370, H7375, & H7529

I write today in support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill.

This legislation is an essential tool for reaffirming Rhode Islanders' right to access essential medical care. Without this legislation, partisan activists from other states are able to use Rhode Island's courts and other resources to harass and surveil the dedicated medical professionals who serve our state.

Right now, Rhode Island suffers from a shortage of primary care providers, a shortage that will only continue to grow. If we permit our state to create a hostile working environment for providers, they will be reluctant to practice here, opting instead to work in neighboring states like Massachusetts and Connecticut who have already passed this type of legislation.

Plus, without a shield law, providers who do stay in the state face personal risks every time they provide care. When patients go to the doctor, they deserve a care interaction in which the doctor is focused on the patient's health care needs—not an interaction in which the specter of criminal and civil penalties is the third party in the room.

I write in addition in opposition to H7370, H7375, and H7529. These bills would have exactly the impact that H7577 is designed to forestall, by making healthcare professionals constantly worry about legal threats to their freedom and person rather than being able to focus on providing necessary health care.

Please pass H7577 and reject H7370, H7375, and H7529 to protect access to health care and to protect health care providers for the good of all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you,

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