

Roberta DiMezza

From: Sharkey, Katherine <katherine_sharkey@brown.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:36 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Cc: RISHieldBill@gmail.com
Subject: Writing in support of H7577 - Health Care Provider Shield Bill

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Chairperson Robert Craven
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

March 5, 2024

Dear Chairperson Craven:

I am writing in strong support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill. I am a physician trained in internal medicine, psychiatry, and sleep medicine and I have a research program dedicated to preventing and treating postpartum depression. This legislation is very important to me and my health care colleagues, and the patients we serve. We cannot allow states that exert government control into individuals' private health care decisions to intrude into the medical decision making of Rhode Island medical providers and patients.

This legislation is about Rhode Island's ability to protect health care providers, patients and access to essential care. It is also about privacy and autonomy. The bill protects established, best-practice medical care that is legal in Rhode Island and ensures our local providers and health care infrastructure aren't negatively impacted by hostile laws in other states. It also will protect our already burdened health care system from time-consuming lawsuits aimed at disrupting health care delivery.

I want to practice in a state that protects me and my patients, and so do other providers. In order for Rhode Island to ensure the viability of our health delivery system it is imperative that Rhode Island remains a competitive practice environment. This common-sense legislation brings Rhode Island in line with 11 states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut.

More than 20 states have enacted bans on essential, established medical care which exert extraordinary control over people's lives and **even impose civil and criminal penalties on providers for practicing medicine in line with the professional standards of care. These bans have the potential to cross state lines and impact providers here.**

I appreciate the support the legislature has shown the provider community in the past and respectfully request your continued support through passage of this vital legislation. Please contact me by return email if I can provide any additional information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Katie Sharkey, MD, PhD

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Katherine M. Sharkey, MD, PhD, FACP, FAASM

she/her

Associate Professor

Associate Dean for Gender Equity

Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Departments of Medicine and Psychiatry & Human Behavior

katherine_sharkey@brown.edu