



RHODE ISLAND WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

Representative Robert Craven, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Support for H-7577, Relating to Health and Safety — Healthcare Provider Shield Act

Chair Craven and Members of the Committee,

The RI Working Families Party, a steadfast advocate for the rights and welfare of all working families in Rhode Island, extends its full support for H-7577, the Healthcare Provider Shield Act (Representative Edwards). This pivotal legislation will defend our healthcare providers and their patients from punitive legal actions that could stem from providing legally protected healthcare services within our state.

Rhode Island prides itself on being a sanctuary where the rights to comprehensive healthcare, including reproductive and transgender healthcare services, are not just acknowledged but fiercely protected. The General Assembly has made great strides in recent years to advance and to defend reproductive healthcare in our state—H-7577 is a natural continuation of that work. This bill will help ensure that our healthcare practitioners can deliver their vital services in alignment with the highest professional standards of care, free from the fear of retaliatory litigation from jurisdictions outside our state.

The unfortunate and targeted enactment of restrictive laws in numerous states across the nation threatens to extend their reach into our jurisdiction, jeopardizing the autonomy and safety of both our healthcare providers and those they serve. The Healthcare Provider Shield Act serves as a critical measure to defend our neighbors' rights to healthcare and to bodily autonomy, ensuring that Rhode Island remains a safe haven for essential healthcare services.

RIWFP, alongside the healthcare community and the families we collectively represent, appreciates the RIGA's historical support for healthcare providers. We urge you to continue this tradition of solidarity and pass H-7577, ensuring the uninterrupted provision of critical healthcare services in our state.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Zachary Mezera
RI Organizing Director
Working Families Party