

4 March 2024

House Judiciary Committee

The State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: SUPPORT for Bill H 7577, introduced Feb 9, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I write in enthusiastic support of House Bill 7577, also known as the Health Care Provider Shield Bill, which would protect legal, standard-of-care transgender and reproductive medical healthcare for patients and providers in Rhode Island.

As more than 20 states across the country have enacted laws that prioritize the whims of a few politicians over peoples' bodily autonomy and ability to make informed decisions with their trusted healthcare providers, Rhode Island can and must do better. We have a responsibility to ensure that the legal right to access reproductive and transgender healthcare is protected in our state. To do so, we must protect healthcare providers in Rhode Island from litigation from other states or penalties from healthcare institutions or insurance companies simply for providing healthcare consistent with professional standards of care. For patients, we must also ensure that their healthcare information is not shared with law enforcement agencies in states where reproductive and/or transgender care is banned, which could result in their facing penalties or even putting them in danger just for getting the healthcare that they need. H 7577 would ensure all of these protections and more.

I want to believe that Rhode Island is a state where we look out for each other, where people feel safe and supported in getting the healthcare that they need to ensure a positive quality of life, where our bodily autonomy is ensured and respected. Passing H7577 would be a big step towards making that a reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Susan Chakmakian
Cranston, RI 02920