

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 Act. I am a resident of Providence, Rhode Island as a student at Brown University. I stand with our health care providers and their patients in support of this important legislation.

This Act will ensure that Rhode Island health care providers can continue to offer essential, best-practice medical care to *all* members of our state – including those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Rhode Island **must** demonstrate its commitment to equitable access to care.

In high school, I met my close friend Jason and learned that he was in the process of transitioning into a boy. I came to understand the intense mental health difficulties that stemmed from his extreme discomfort in his body and inability to access gender-affirming care. “At the end of each day, I'd change out of my clothes and try not to look in the mirror. If I did, a feeling of gut-wrenching disgust would wash over me,” he told me. “As I grew older, my dysphoria only increased.” Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) was an essential treatment for his emotional and physical health – but it was simply out of reach.

When Jason turned 18, he used the informed consent process to obtain a prescription for testosterone from Planned Parenthood. Now 21, Jason continues to receive gender-affirming care and thrives because of it. “Words are not enough to express how much hormone replacement therapy has benefitted my body and my mind. I am proud and content with the changes testosterone has brought me - my deep voice that gets deeper when I'm sick, my facial and body hair, and the muscle definition and fat redistribution that allow me to fit into clothes the way I feel I should be able to. My body truly does match my mind,” he said.

More than 20 states have enacted bans on similar medical care which exert unwarranted control over people's lives and prevent Americans from accessing the services they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives. These bans have the potential to cross state lines and impact residents of Rhode Island. This legislation is **essential** to protect providers and their patients, and to ensure the viability of the health delivery system.

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. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Talía Reiss



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