

April 23, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary

HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

Re: Opposition for H 5923

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony of my opposition to H 5923. I am an adolescent medicine physician, pediatrician, and resident of Rhode Island.

This bill is unnecessary and overly broad. We already have state laws on the books that penalizes the knowing distribution, reproduction, or possession of child pornography (R.I. GEN. LAWS § 11-9-1.3). As a health care provider specializing in sexual and reproductive health, I am concerned about this proposal and lack of clear definitions and vagueness that could target factual, age-appropriate education and information provided to minors as criminal conduct. In the current political climate and constant threats to reproductive and LGBTQ+ health and rights bills like this are particularly concerning for the impact it could have on individual freedoms and freedom of speech. I see patients every day in clinic who have limited understanding of reproductive health topics, and this bill can undermine efforts for evidence-based sexual health education.

I strongly urge this committee to vote no on H 5923 as I have great concerns about any bill that aims at regulating speech and expression in this manner. This bill, while may be well intentioned, could be misused to censor people based on subjective viewpoints and there are already laws in place that address this and this bill could undermine existing law. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Maayan Leroy-Melamed, MD, MPH

Adolescent Medicine Physician