



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-H 7202,
AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -
PROCEDURE GENERALLY - CAUSES OF ACTION -
THE RHODE ISLAND FEDERAL CONSTITUTION ACT
House Committee on Judiciary**

**Hannah Stern - Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**

March 4, 2026

Dear Chair McEntee and honorable members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

In my capacity as the Director, Public Policy and Government Relations at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE), I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony **in support of House Bill H 7202**. PPSNE provided sexual and reproductive health care to nearly 10,000 Rhode Island patients last year and believes all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

Reproductive freedom encompasses the ability to make meaningful decisions about a person’s life, health, and livelihood without fear of injustice. While victims of federal governmental deprivation of constitutional and civil rights may file for injunctive relief for such violations, the United States Supreme Court has precluded the ability for litigants to seek damages and monetary relief for these violations in *federal* court. Injunctive relief is critical to prevent future harms – but individuals whose civil liberties have been breached deserve the ability to seek recompense for the impact that these harms have inflicted on their ability to exercise their right to reproductive freedom and other rights.

This legislation, especially in light of the devastating effect that federal actions from federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement have had on communities and individuals nationwide, recognizes that there must be an avenue for tangible damages such that people harmed by these unlawful governmental protocols can rebuild their lives and continue to seek the freedoms that they deserve. In such a time, it is the responsibility of our state to ensure that, as this bill provides, victims of these actions are able to seek

reasonable damages for federal violations of constitutional rights through a private cause of action in our state courts.

In line with PPSNE's dedication to fighting for policies that comprehensively protect the lives of all Rhode Islanders as a way of ensuring that our patients, and our communities, have the resources they need to live healthy, safe, and self-determined lives, we urge support for H 7202.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Stern', is positioned above the typed name.

Hannah Stern
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