



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-H 7185,
AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -
PROTECTIONS OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ACT
House Committee on Judiciary
Hannah Stern - Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
March 10, 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 7185**. 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.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* created a devastating public health crisis by severely limiting access to abortion care. Three years later, we continue to find ourselves in a critical moment in our country where basic health care and rights remain vulnerable, and which has shown that the anti-abortion movement's goal is to ban abortion by any means necessary. Anti-abortion advocates have tried to end access to FDA-approved Mifepristone, which has been repeatedly proven safe and effective for decades. They have taken to the courts to try to end emergency medical care for pregnant people. And, in July 2025, the federal H.R. 1 legislation barred Planned Parenthood health care centers from billing Medicaid for reimbursement for preventative services such as birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing and treatment, representing a strategy which seeks to limit Planned Parenthood's overall operations and thereby eliminate access to abortion services as collateral damage of this ban.

Rhode Island has been a leader and has taken swift action to protect and expand reproductive health and rights in recent years, including passing the Healthcare Provider

Shield Act in 2024 to protect health care providers who are delivering essential care to patients in Rhode Island. We see shield laws help to ensure those providing necessary legal health care – including abortion and gender affirming care – can continue to do so even when facing the threat of hostile enforcement from states that have banned these essential health services. H 7185 is another step to further protect health care providers in our state.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure that our patients and our communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. H 7185 is a critical next step in protecting health care providers as they work to maintain access to the health care services that Rhode Island has fought so hard to protect.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

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

Hannah Stern
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
hannah.stern@ppsne.org