

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Name: Jorge Rico

Organization: Concordia Center for Spiritual Living, Leadership Council Chairperson; Rhode Island State Council of Churches Member Congregation & Board of Governors

Town of Residence: East Greenwich, Rhode Island

Bill #: H 7357-**Reproductive Health & Gender-Affirming Healthcare Data Privacy Act**

Viewpoint: IN FAVOR

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jorge A. Rico. I am a 35+ year resident of Rhode Island, a resident of East Greenwich, and the Chairperson of the Leadership Council of Concordia Center for Spiritual Living in Warwick, a congregation that is a proud member of the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, Where I serves as a member of the Board of Governors. I write today in strong support of H 7357, the Reproductive Health and Gender-Affirming Healthcare Data Privacy Act, and I urge this Committee to advance it without delay.

I am also the parent of a transgender adult child. My child is a contributing, productive member of our community - gainfully employed, generous in spirit, and actively engaged in civic life. They regularly donate to charitable causes and, in a gesture of remarkable grace and selflessness, donate blood to the Rhode Island Blood Bank. They did so just this afternoon. My child is, in every sense, a gift to this state. And yet, without legislation like H 7357, their most private health information - the details of the care that has affirmed their identity and wellbeing - could be collected, sold, and shared without their knowledge or consent.

As a faith leader, I am called to defend the dignity and safety of every person in our community. Our congregation believes that each individual is sacred and deserving of protection, particularly when they seek healthcare. The trafficking of sensitive health data for commercial gain is not merely a privacy violation - it is a moral wrong. It exposes our most vulnerable neighbors to discrimination, harassment, and harm. H 7357 draws a principled line: this data belongs to the individual, not to data brokers or advertisers.

This bill wisely requires that entities obtain informed, affirmative consent before collecting or sharing consumer health data related to gender-affirming or reproductive care, establishes meaningful consumer rights to access and delete their data, restricts geofencing around healthcare facilities, and provides real enforcement tools including a private right of action. These are not bureaucratic hurdles - they are guardrails for human dignity.

Rhode Island has long been a state that leads on inclusion and justice. I respectfully ask this Committee to honor that legacy by passing H 7357. Our transgender neighbors, our daughters, our sons, and all those who seek sensitive healthcare in this state deserve to do so without fear that their most private information will be weaponized against them.

Thank you for your service to the people of Rhode Island and for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge A. Rico

Chairperson, Leadership Council / Concordia Center for Spiritual Living

Member Congregation, RI State Council of Churches & Member of the Board of Governors