

**Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**

**Testimony in SUPPORT for House Bill 5515**

**JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS**

**A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION – OF SUFFRAGE**

**House State Government and Elections Committee**

**March 18, 2025**

Chair Shanley and honorable members of the House State Government and Elections Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) testifying in **support of House Bill 5515 (Rep. Alzate)**. PPSNE provided sexual and reproductive health care to nearly 8,000 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.

PPSNE is proud to work with organizations and people in Rhode Island who are engaged in voter education and civic engagement and to be a part of the Let RI Vote for Same Day Registration campaign.

Reproductive freedom cannot be achieved without the right to vote. The ability to preserve and expand access to reproductive rights rests on the right to vote and people to participate in our democracy fully. Voter suppression harms those who are most impacted by anti-reproductive health and rights laws — people of color, young people, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and people with low-incomes — and it directly impedes their ability to fight back against political attempts to control their bodies and reproductive health. Without the right to vote, these communities all lose the right to decide and plan their futures. Voting is how we take control of our bodies, lives, and futures. That is why we support H 5515.

Rhode Island can make our elections more inclusive and accessible by allowing for same-day voter registration. We know this works as we can see from the 23 states and Washington D.C. who are offering same-day registration even if residents missed the chance to register to vote in the weeks or months prior and by doing so it allows for greater participation in the political process. While we are witnessing threats to voting rights nationwide, our state must act now to eliminate barriers for our residents to fully participate in elections. Just as Rhode Island has updated other aspects of our voting system - through automatic voter registration, online voter registration, expanded access to mail ballots and early voting - we should do away with the outdated deadline system that is an artifact of a time when voter registration was an all-paper process, something that no longer exists.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients and communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. Having a meaningful right to vote is a critical part in ensuring our elected leaders prioritize efforts to defend and expand our reproductive rights. We urge the committee and legislature to vote in support of H 5515 to make voting more accessible in Rhode Island. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Gretchen Raffa  
Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer  
[Gretchen.raffa@ppsne.org](mailto:Gretchen.raffa@ppsne.org)