



State of Rhode Island COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

180 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 – Tel. 401-222-2661

TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: 2026 H 7304
AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND
GOVERNMENT – OPEN MEETINGS
PRIMARY SPONSORS: Representative Kazarian
COMMITTEE: House State Government & Elections
DATE: January 27, 2025

The Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (“Commission”) **supports this bill.**

The Commission is the state’s primary antidiscrimination law enforcement agency charged with investigating allegations of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and delivery of services.

H 7304 allows members of a public body who are pregnant or who have given birth in the last six months to attend and participate in the public body’s open meetings via electronic or telephone communication. The General Assembly has recognized the benefits of providing accommodations to those who are pregnant or who have recently given birth in it’s amendment to the Fair Employment Practices Act requiring reasonable accommodations. The Legislative Findings from that Act provide in part:

It is the intent of the General Assembly to combat pregnancy discrimination, promote public health, and ensure full and equal participation for women in the labor force by requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition.

2015 P.L. Ch. 151

Similarly, H 7304 provides an accommodation so that public bodies are not deprived of the full participation and experience of their members who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.

For these reasons, the Commission urges passage.

Commission contact: Cynthia M. Hiatt, Commissioner, 222.7561