

April 9, 2026

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan
House Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

In support of H 7940, An Act Relating to Insurance – Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies

Chair Donovan and honorable members of the Rhode Island House Health and Human Services Committee, the members of LGBTQIA+ Action Rhode Island write to you in strong support of H 7940, which enacts a long overdue update to Rhode Island's health insurance non-discrimination laws.

LGBTQIA+ Action RI is a volunteer community collaborative of individuals from across the state dedicated to securing equality and justice for LGBTQIA+ Rhode Islanders. Founded in 2016, LGBTQIA+ Action RI has contributed to the passing of legislation, including the ban on conversion therapy, the Respect in Death Act, gender inclusive restrooms, and the Uniform Parentage Act. LGBTQIA+ Action RI is committed to ensuring Rhode Island remains at the forefront of honoring and protecting LGBTQIA+ rights and equality.

We applaud the work that this committee has done to ensure Rhode Islanders are able to access the healthcare they need and are treated with dignity in our healthcare systems. As animus toward LGBTQIA+ communities has risen nationally, this committee has passed legislation like the 2023 bill ensuring that healthcare providers cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity, upholding Rhode Island's long history of treating LGBTQIA+ people with equal dignity. Your action is required urgently now so that Rhode Island law speaks just as clearly in prohibiting discrimination in health insurance coverage as it does in healthcare facility access.

You will doubtlessly hear from many others that the Rhode Island statute on health insurance non-discrimination is woefully out of date, and out of step with many other areas of Rhode Island law. This shortcoming has been less urgent than other laws and policies in Rhode Island and at the federal level, and the health insurers themselves have created reasonable access to necessary healthcare in RI. That is not to say our existing system couldn't be better and still doesn't fall short of providing everyone with the healthcare that they need. However, political forces outside Rhode Island are working to dismantle the protections we have already achieved and dole out healthcare not based on medical standards or need but based on who is politically favored and what types of healthcare are politically favored.

H 7940 would send the clearest message that Rhode Island is a place where an individual cannot be denied medically necessary healthcare because of who they are,

and that will not change with political tides outside of the Ocean State. This bill will provide a necessary backstop as federal non-discrimination protections we could once rely on are being rolled back or unenforced in what are, themselves, discriminatory actions. This bill will reassure the over 50,000 LGBTQIA+ people in Rhode Island that our equal dignity under the law and our ability to lead full, healthy lives endures.

We thank Representative Kislak and the co-sponsors for their leadership and action at this critical time. We respectfully urge this committee to support passage of H 7940.

Sincerely,
LGBTQIA+ Action Rhode Island

LGBTQIA+ ACTION 
RHODE ISLAND