



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-S 2238 & H 7127 Article 5,
Section 6**

Senate Committee on Finance

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

Hannah Stern – Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

April 30, 2026

Dear Chair DiPalma and honorable members of the Senate Committee on Finance:

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 Senate Bill S 2238 and Article 5, Section 6 of the proposed FY 2027 budget**. 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.

One of the more immediate and acutely paramount issues for this legislature to address is the health care affordability crisis for Rhode Islanders. With unrelenting federal attacks on providers, including Planned Parenthood through a defund provision in H.R. 1 that blocks Planned Parenthood from submitting for reimbursement of preventive services to federal Medicaid, leaving the 24% of PPSNE patients in Rhode Island that are insured under Medicaid vulnerable; federal cuts to Medicaid that will leave tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders without health insurance coverage; and the failure to renew ACA enhanced premium tax credits for health insurance, the state of health care affordability has perhaps never been more precarious and tenuous.

Of course, addressing health care affordability – and the many social determinants of health which additionally impact this crisis – requires concerted funding and dedicated financial resources. When affordable housing initiatives; food assistance programs; public education and higher education opportunities; public transportation; and a robust job market are all appropriately supported, health outcomes, and, critically, patient access to health care, are improved. The most logical and pragmatic approach to sourcing this funding is through ensuring that all individuals are fairly and equitably paying taxes, and that those who rely on public infrastructure for their own growth of wealth are adequately contributing back into communities.

It is incontrovertible that our health care systems – and the many public systems which intersect with health care access and community health outcomes – cannot survive without specific and additional investment. We know, through the experience of our patients, the juggling that families must do to ensure they have money for bills, food, shelter, and other necessities along with health care services. We also know that when health care costs are high, the need for care does not disappear or diminish, and that delays in preventive care increase health care costs and create worse long-term health outcomes for both individuals and communities. This widespread affordability crisis cannot become an additional burden placed on both patients who are struggling to meet their basic needs and the health care providers who are seeking to provide compassionate, comprehensive, and sustainable care to their patients.

Wealth taxes are simply policies that ensure that all residents of our state are paying their fair share for the public systems we all use, and which, in many cases, have buoyed wealthier individuals in the expansion of their own resources. Redistribution of wealth is good economic policy and good public health policy. This legislation is one way to guarantee that Rhode Island remains a safe and accessible place for all residents and their families to thrive regardless of their economic status. For these reasons, we urge support of S 2238 and Article 5, Section 6 of the proposed FY 2027 budget.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

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

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