



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-S 2681,
AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES - HOUSING -
STATE-FUNDED RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM
Senate Committee on Finance
Hannah Stern - Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
May 7, 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 2681**. 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.

Reproductive freedom includes economic security for all, which in turn ensures greater access to health care, critical resources, and, importantly, housing. This legislation addresses the ongoing financial pressures that Rhode Islanders face as they seek to access and maintain sustainable and stable housing.

There is an inextricable connection between housing security and the ability for all individuals to access the resources that they need to fully achieve reproductive freedom. When patients face a lack of stable housing, continuity of care – and especially the provision of preventive care - is disrupted as patients must instead focus their resources on finding and maintaining appropriate shelter. We know that “people experiencing housing instability and chronic homelessness have worse health outcomes, less access to primary care, and higher hospital use than those with stable housing,”¹ but that secure housing allows for an individual’s focus to expand to their ability to access other critical resources for their own reproductive freedom such as employment, reliable transportation, and, importantly, consistent health care.

Crossroads Rhode Island reports that between 2020 and 2024, Rhode Island experienced a 394% increase in unsheltered homelessness; and, at the same time, notes that when unhoused people are provided “an adequate supply of affordable housing and appropriate support, more than 90% of those who experience homelessness in Rhode Island each year ultimately achieve self-sufficiency and never become homeless again.”² Especially while our state is facing a crisis in housing availability and affordability, we must explore state-level solutions to support renters in their ability to seek and maintain safe, affordable, and stable housing, which is in turn a necessary component of health equity, economic security, and bodily autonomy.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure that our patients and our communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. S 2681 contains an important proposal for ensuring that all Rhode Islanders have the housing security to access the health care that they deserve.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Stern', written in a cursive style.

Hannah Stern
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
hannah.stern@ppsne.org