



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-S 2032**

**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE – ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES**

**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**

**Hannah Stern – Director, Public Policy and Government Relations**

**April 14, 2026**

Dear Chair Murray and honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

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 strong support of Senate Bill S 2032**. 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.

For millions of people in our country, our rights and access to health care are on the line due to actions at the federal level, including through the passing of H.R. 1, which has cut health care funding, gutted Medicaid, and “defunded” Planned Parenthood, and through Congress blocking the extension of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits. In Rhode Island, it is critical that we take steps to ensure people can get the health care they need when they need it. By expanding health coverage and access to birth control to millions, the ACA has been a true game changer for patients including providing coverage for preventive health care for women without cost-sharing, including breast cancer screening.

Before the enactment of the ACA, the reality of healthcare was that millions of patients and women were denied coverage because of so-called “pre-existing conditions” like breast cancer or pregnancy; some were forced to pay more for insurance simply because they were women; and some were only allowed limited plans that excluded coverage for any health concerns they already had. We thank this committee and the legislature for prioritizing codifying key provisions of the ACA into state law as it continues to be under attack at the federal level.

Although screening mammograms are free to most insured women starting at age 40, any follow-up care or testing, diagnostic services, and treatment costs result in varied out-of-pocket cost sharing for patients that could further delay care for patients. Due to these costs, many patients delay receiving follow-up diagnostic tests (and future mammograms), resulting in later-stage cancer diagnoses and higher healthcare costs. More than 70% of women in the U.S. face cost barriers to accessing follow up breast cancer diagnostic tests and the typical patient had to pay approximately \$170 in out-of-pocket costs. That is why we support S 2032 to reduce another barrier to accessing care for patients who need follow up tests.

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. The evidence is clear on the benefit of early detection of breast cancer through screening, follow-up testing, and imaging which includes improving survival and reducing mortality by detecting cancer at an earlier stage when treatment is more effective and less costly. We urge the committee and legislature to vote in support of S 2032 to reduce out-of-pocket costs for essential health care and improve patient health outcomes.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H. Stern'.

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