



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

**Testimony in Support of 26-S 2254,  
AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -  
ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES  
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Hannah Stern - Director, Public Policy and Government Relations  
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England  
April 7, 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 2254**. 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.

As basic health care and rights are inappropriately used as political tactics, lawmakers who are hostile to reproductive health and reproductive rights continue to escalate restrictions on abortion access, birth control, gender-affirming health care, fertility care, and seek to shut down Planned Parenthood health centers. Preventive health care – including birth control – is basic and necessary health care and all people deserve access to the contraceptive method that is best suited for them. This bill would ensure access to all FDA-approved contraceptive methods; limit insurer restrictions on birth control coverage; and provide that the no-cost provision for over-the-counter contraception and alternative contraceptive therapies makes birth control more readily accessible.

In 2024, our legislature codified critical protections from the Affordable Care Act into Rhode Island state law, ensuring that, regardless of federal action on the ACA, Rhode Islanders maintain fundamental health care access rights, including no-cost sharing for preventive services including contraception. This signaled Rhode Island’s commitment to preserving health care affordability through coverage requirements.

Expanding birth control access is not only a health care issue, but a policy issue central to both familial health and economic justice. For example, the nonpartisan Institute of Medicine recommends insurance coverage of birth control as both a preventive care measure and because improved access to birth control is linked to declines in maternal and infant mortality. However, regardless of whether a person has insurance or not, the cost of birth control can take a significant

toll on a person's finances. The assurance that a person's contraception will be financially covered – no matter what their needs and priorities are – preserves autonomy. When people have the financial flexibility to choose the birth control method that is right for them, people will be more satisfied with their chosen method and use it the most effectively to prevent unintended pregnancies, which in turn grants them the appropriate time and space to plan for intentional pregnancies. When people do not need to weigh their medical options against the cost of care, reproductive freedom is improved.

The legacy of research on contraceptive care has established oral contraceptives as safe and effective at preventing pregnancy. In July 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Opill, the first over-the-counter birth control pill for people of all ages, based on the strong scientific evidence of its safety and efficacy. As a result, people can now access birth control without a prescription at convenience stores, grocery stores, drug stores, and through online methods, making insurance coverage for all types of contraception even more vital. Cost – and over-the-counter availability – should not diminish the impact of such a milestone in birth control medication, and its availability is monumental in empowering people to take control of their health, bodies, and future.

Protecting and expanding birth control access is the right thing to do, and it is also the politically popular thing to do, as we know through polling that Americans consistently support birth control access as a preventive health care. In line with PPSNE's commitment to its mission that every person deserves access to the care and resources that they need, we strongly support S 2254 as a method of guaranteeing Rhode Islander's right to affordable, accessible reproductive care.

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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