

February 23, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Murray and honorable members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

I am a fourth-year medical student at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and I am writing in support of S2379, which among other things, mandates insurers to provide health insurance coverage without cost-share requirements for vaccinations recommended by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

As I near the end of my undergraduate medical education I have decided to pursue residency in adult neurology. It is the field that has brought me the most joy, intellectual interest and one that I believe will serve as a medium for me to positively impact the health and wellbeing of my future patients. However, nothing I will achieve in my career will come close to improving patient health as much as vaccines.

Just one example of the substantial public health impact of vaccines was the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine in 2006. Prior to 2006, the US saw 55,000 - 70,000 hospitalizations and 20 - 60 childhood deaths from rotavirus<sup>1</sup>. In the decade following the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine, there was an 80% drop in rotavirus related hospitalizations in the US<sup>2</sup>. This vaccine not only improves the health of children by avoiding a serious diarrheal illness but also decreases healthcare spending and hospital burden.

In my nascent career in medicine, I have already seen numerous patients skeptical of vaccines for themselves and their children. My experience parallels the larger scale measles outbreaks in several states across the country and new guidelines from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices no longer universally recommending several vaccines - including rotavirus. This current climate surrounding vaccines gives particular importance and urgency to senate bill S2379 to make vaccines financially feasible for all patients and to serve as a symbol of support for the evidence-based benefits of widespread vaccination.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony,

Sam Hochberger

Medical Student at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, April 2). *Clinical overview of rotavirus*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
2. Pindyck, T., Tate, J. E., & Parashar, U. D. (2018). A decade of experience with rotavirus vaccination in the United States - vaccine uptake, effectiveness, and impact. *Expert review of vaccines*, 17(7), 593–606.