

Good evening, Chair Murray and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Emily Gates, and I am here today in strong support of S2455 – the Scalp Cooling Bill.

In the spring of 2024, I graduated from college and was preparing to begin life in the “real world”, applying for jobs, interviewing, and traveling when I could. That sense of normalcy, however, was not shared by my close friend Jessie.

In October of 2024, Jessie was diagnosed with breast cancer. This news was incredibly shocking. Jessie and I went to school together through middle school, and although we later attended different schools, we stayed in touch over the years. I had never known anyone my age to be diagnosed with breast cancer, so it was a shock for me, but I can only imagine how it was for Jessie and her family.

Beyond the physical toll, cancer brings emotional and psychological challenges that are often overlooked. One of the most visible and distressing side effects of chemotherapy is hair loss. For many patients, losing their hair is not just cosmetic; it is a constant public reminder of their illness, affecting self-esteem, mental health, and how they interact with the world around them.

Insurance coverage for scalp cooling is about dignity. It allows patients to look in the mirror and recognize themselves, to go to work or appointments without feeling the need to hide under a scarf or hat to avoid questions or stares. Preserving a sense of normalcy can make a meaningful difference during treatment.

Just as importantly, coverage is about equity. No one undergoing cancer treatment should be denied supportive care because of cost. Cancer does not discriminate, and access to care should not depend on how much money someone has in their bank account.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge the Committee to bring bill S2455 forward for consideration on the floor.

Thank you,

*Emily Gates*

*Coventry, RI*