



The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

Office of the District 1
Legislative Chair

Beth Cronin, MD, FACOG

March 24, 2026

Dear Chair Murray and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

On behalf of the Rhode Island Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (RI-ACOG), I am writing in support of the proposal to establish a Medical Malpractice Commission.

Obstetrics and gynecology is one of the highest-risk specialties in medicine, and the medical liability environment plays a significant role in shaping access to care for women and families across Rhode Island. Ensuring a stable and sustainable workforce in this field is critical to maintaining access to maternity and reproductive healthcare services.

Rhode Island's liability environment continues to be a factor in physician recruitment and retention. Physicians considering where to practice evaluate not only clinical opportunities, but also the broader practice environment, including liability exposure and the predictability of the legal system. In a specialty where coverage is required 24 hours a day, these considerations are especially important.

We all share the goal of ensuring that patients receive appropriate, high-quality care and that there is accountability when outcomes are not as expected. At the same time, it is important that the system supports timely resolution and does not create unintended barriers to sustaining a strong physician workforce.

In Rhode Island, cases can take years to resolve. Structural factors, including prejudgment interest, contribute to extended timelines that can be difficult for patients seeking closure and create prolonged uncertainty for physicians practicing in high-risk settings.

Access to obstetric care is particularly sensitive to these dynamics. Nationally and regionally, we are seeing growing challenges in maintaining adequate maternity care coverage. Ensuring a stable and predictable practice environment is essential to maintaining access to care for pregnant patients and for women across the continuum of care.

The establishment of a Medical Malpractice Commission provides an important opportunity to bring together stakeholders to examine these issues in a thoughtful and comprehensive way. A collaborative, data-driven process will help identify solutions that support both patients and providers and strengthen the healthcare system as a whole.

RI-ACOG supports this proposal and appreciates the Committee's consideration of this important issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Cronin, MD
District 1, Legislative Chair, ACOG