

Written Testimony to the Rhode Island General Assembly

To: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Alex Ivanchev

Date: April 10, 2025

Re: Support, Senate Bill 479 Requiring Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Dear Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Alex Ivanchev and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 479. Thank you to Senator Mack for sponsoring and Senators Vargas, Kallman, Murray, Lauria, Acosta, Urso, Valverde, Quezada, DiMario, and Ujifusa for co-sponsoring.

I am writing to you today because of my commitment to support all pregnant people in the state of Rhode Island. As a Master's Candidate at the Brown University School of Public Health, I am constantly reminded by glaring maternal health statistics that the U.S. possesses the highest maternal mortality rate compared to other economically-developed nations. Further, Black women are around three times more likely to die during childbirth. This is simply unacceptable. Women in Rhode Island should be able to give birth without the fear of their own lives. We must take action to honor the beauty of pregnancy and ensure that the birthing process is safe for every reproductive-age person in this state.

I am in strong support of expanding access to seek midwifery services. Midwives have been proven to reduce overall maternal mortality and improve other maternal health indicators. Midwives play an important role in achieving reproductive justice; yet, their services can only be leveraged if we work to make this option economically accessible to RI residents. By allowing pregnant people to be fully covered by their insurance to access Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), we are casting a vote for all women in Rhode Island. We are telling them we care about their wellbeing and the health of their pregnancies. Further, we are casting a vote for future generations of Rhode Islanders who will be able to grow up under the care of their own mothers.

I urge you to strongly support the passage of Senate Bill 479 to ensure that all families in Rhode Island have access to insurance coverage of CPMs. Passing this bill is critical to achieving birth equity in this state and removing barriers to accessing high-quality maternal care. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

All My Best,

Alex Ivanchev

Brown University Class of 2025