

February 7, 2023

Re: Support for HB 7093

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

Rhode Island's Chapter of The American College of Emergency Physicians strongly supports House Bill 7093. Rhode Island is one of the hardest places to practice medicine in the United States. This is based on many national metrics comparing rates of malpractice claims, cost of malpractice insurance premiums and rate of physician reimbursement. In some comparisons we are dead last in the country.

We see this every day when we take care of Rhode Islanders in our emergency departments. Our colleagues are leaving for other states in droves and our hospitals struggle to meet these high malpractice premiums. Every day at work, patients ask us if we could recommend a good doctor because theirs's moved out of state. We don't have an answer for them, we tell them to start calling around and wish them luck finding someone taking new patients.

This has reached crisis level, and it didn't happen by accident. It happened through years of legislation tipping the scales in favor of the malpractice law industry. One example: 9-21-10 sets a prejudgment interest rate of 12%. This rate accrues from the time of incident until the settlement date. This is an embarrassingly high rate, dwarfing the rates of inflation, rates set by the federal reserve and is the highest in the country. It is also an incentive for plaintiff's lawyers to never settle and prolong a case for as long as possible.

HB 7093 is a first step in correcting these laws, and we are pleased to see that this committee recognizes how important this is for Rhode Islanders. Rhode Island is losing its doctors and nurses, and this bill is a great first step toward bringing them back.

Sincerely,



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President, RI ACEP



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