

February 8, 2024

RE: Support for H 7234

**Al Puerini, M.D., F.A.A.F.P.
471 Field Hill Rd.
Clayville, R.I.**

Good evening, Chairwoman Donovan and members of the committee. As a lifelong Rhode Islander, I urge you to support House Bill 7234. I am board certified in Family Medicine and also practice sports medicine. I completed the last two years of my clinical training during medical school at Brown University, where I also completed my residency. I also serve as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Brown's Warren Alpert Medical School. In June 2022, I was elected as Professor Emeritus of Family Medicine.

I treated patients in Rhode Island for 35 years in my private practice. I currently serve as Head Team Physician for the Providence College Athletic Department. I was President and CEO of Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians Corporation, which is comprised of 150 primary care physicians, for 28 years. In addition, I previously served on the President's Executive Committee of the Rhode Island Medical Society and was named Physician of the Year by the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians in 2017. I provide you with that background so that you understand my lifelong commitment to the medical care of Rhode Islanders.

Decades ago, animals—including the rabbit I was required to perform an appendectomy on during medical school—were commonly used in medical student and physician training programs in the United States. But over the last 30 years, almost all of those programs have shifted to using simulators, which very accurately replicate human anatomy and physiology.

The patients we treat are changing, and technology is changing. With a greater number of obese patients, emergency providers need to understand the obese airway. The best way to model such an airway is to use 3D printers, which are in use all around the world for this very purpose. So why are the few doctors in charge of the Brown-Rhode Island Hospital emergency medicine program not changing too?

House Bill 7234 would address the substandard animal-based training occurring in that program and ensure that Rhode Island is a leader in ethical, human-relevant medical training.

I urge the committee to move this bill forward.

Thank you for your time and attention.