



Testimony in SUPPORT for H 7091
Vimala Phongsavanh, Senior Director, External Affairs
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Rhode Island House Committee on Health and Human Services
Thursday, February 15, 2024

Chair Donovan and honorable members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England with **strong support for House Bill 7091 (Rep. Kislak) to safeguard Affordable Care Act's prohibition against annual and lifetime limits.** This legislation will guarantee access to comprehensive coverage that can't be cut off based on a person's health status. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE), a member of the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition, provided sexual and reproductive health care to over 7,000 patients last year at our Providence health center. We believe all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

The reality before the ACA was millions of women were denied coverage because of so-called “pre-existing conditions” like breast cancer or pregnancy; some were forced to pay more for insurance just because they were women; and some were only allowed limited plans that excluded coverage for any health concerns they already had. The ACA has been a true game changer for women including preventive health care covered with no-cost sharing. That is why **H7091 is such critical and necessary legislation to safeguard — in state law — the Affordable Care Act's protection that assures that people will not suddenly lose health coverage if they have a particularly expensive health event.**

Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, more than 2,000 legal challenges have been filed in state and federal courts contesting part or all of the ACA. The most recent challenge, Braidwood Management v. Becerra, involves the ACA requirement that most private insurance plans cover recommended preventive care services without cost sharing.¹ The ruling is currently being appealed, and just one of many ongoing lawsuits that threaten access to sexual and reproductive health care.

This is an urgent matter because over a decade after the ACA passage and a more hostile and political judicial branch, we unfortunately can see a future where the ACA essential health benefits, including preventive health services coverage is eliminated. Polling consistently shows that Americans continue to support including birth control under health insurance plans as preventive health care. Despite the ACA being upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2021, individual components of the Federal law remain at risk from politically motivated attacks from anti-ACA, anti-reproductive health, anti-LGBTQ+ judges and lawmakers across the country. **Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and our allies in the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom (RICRF) supports H 7091 to codify this important ACA protection in state law and ensure that Rhode Island does not go back to the days when, after paying premiums for years, people could lose coverage simply for needing life-saving care.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vimala Phongsavanh'.

Vimala Phongsavanh, MPA
Senior Director, External Affairs
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
175 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02903
vimala.phongsavanh@ppsne.org