

Roberta DiMezza

From: Allie Scheer <a.b.scheer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 9:56 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Cc: RISHieldBuild@gmail.com
Subject: RI Shield Bill

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Chairperson Robert Craven
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

March 5, 2024

Dear Chairperson Craven:

I am writing in strong support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill. I am an independently licensed clinical social worker and serve as both a clinician and behavioral health leader at Thundermist Health Center. This legislation is very important to me and my health care colleagues, and the patients we serve.

This legislation is about Rhode Island's ability to protect health care providers, patients and access to essential care. The bill protects established, best-practice medical care that is legal in Rhode Island and ensures our local providers and health care infrastructure aren't negatively impacted by hostile laws in other states.

This legislation is necessary because these laws have the potential to interfere with delivery of health care in Rhode Island and create a chilling effect for providers like me.

I want to practice in a state that protects me and my patients, and so do other providers. In order for Rhode Island to ensure the viability of our health delivery system it is imperative that Rhode Island remains a competitive practice environment. This common-sense legislation brings Rhode Island in line with 11 states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut.

More than 20 states have enacted bans on essential, established medical care which exert extraordinary control over people's lives and **even impose civil and criminal penalties on providers for practicing medicine in line with the professional standards of care. These bans have the potential to cross state lines and impact providers here.**

In my role, I provide daily supervision to clinicians who are increasingly fearful about their ability to continue providing medically necessary services as we witness what is happening in other states. I am counseling patients struggling with what their future would look like if essential care is taken away. This bill will offer much needed safety and security to both the patients we serve and those of us delivering these services. We have already seen the negative impact on the quality of healthcare where providers fear delivering safe, essential medicine, compared to quality of care in Rhode Island where providers are able to deliver high quality, evidence based services in line with the medical standards of care.

I appreciate the support the legislature has shown the provider community in the past and respectfully request your continued support through passage of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Allie Scheer, LICSW
Director of Behavioral Health and Social Services
Thundermist Health Center