

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Rhode Island Chapter

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Chair Robert Craven
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives

March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Craven:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in **strong support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill**. Our organization views this legislation as critical for our state's pediatricians and the patients we serve.

The Health Care Provider Shield Bill would **protect best-practice medical care that is legal in Rhode Island**. Other states have enacted bans on essential, established medical care. These hostile laws harm children and families by preventing them from accessing the care they need, and even **impose civil and criminal penalties on providers for practicing medicine in line with professional standards of care**.

H7577 is necessary because harmful laws passed in other states have the potential to cross state lines and interfere with delivery of health care in Rhode Island. Without H7577, Rhode Island could see a chilling effect on medical practice with a detrimental impact on our communities.

It is imperative that Rhode Island remains a competitive practice environment to ensure the viability of our health delivery system. **This common-sense legislation brings Rhode Island in line with 11 other states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that youth who are transgender and gender diverse have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care that is provided in safe and inclusive clinical spaces.¹ The AAP also recommends that adolescents and young adults who are facing an unplanned pregnancy have access to medically accurate, unbiased, and developmentally appropriate information about their pregnancy options, including abortion, and support in obtaining abortion care if they choose.² These are the kinds of care that will be jeopardized in Rhode Island without passage of H7577.

¹ Jason Rafferty, COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE, SECTION ON LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER HEALTH AND WELLNESS, et al; Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents. *Pediatrics* October 2018; 142 (4): e20182162.

² AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE; Options Counseling for the Pregnant Adolescent Patient. *Pediatrics* August 2022; 150 (3): e2022058781.

Out-of-state laws banning access to essential medical care takes away people's freedom to make important medical decisions for themselves and their families, informed by guidance from trusted providers, and replaces it with the wishes of politicians. That's not the Rhode Island way.

We are grateful for the support the legislature has shown the provider community in the past and respectfully request your continued support through passage of this vital legislation. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Emily Allen, MD, MPH, FAAP
Board of Directors
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics