

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Hashway, Victoria <Victoria.Hashway@Lifespan.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 5, 2024 2:32 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee; Migliori, Michael E. MD; Collins, Bradley J; Smith, Heather; Stavros, Kara A.; Himelfarb, Nadine T; Stump, Mariah H; Smith, Matthew J  
**Cc:** Rich, Josiah MD; RIShieldBill@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Copy of Dr. Rich's Letter of Support for H7577

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Good morning, all,

I am the administrative assistant to Dr. Josiah Rich, he has asked that I send a content of the letter he wrote in support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill. If there is anything else needed, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for your service to the Rhode Island medical community, and for bringing this call to action to the attention of the physicians it effects.

The below text is the content of the letter:

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 a Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Brown University, and Principal Investigator of Rhode Island Hospital's Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) on Opioids and Overdose. This legislation is very important to me, my health care colleagues, and the patients we serve.

This legislation protects health care providers, patients, and access to essential reproductive and gender affirming care in the state of Rhode Island. This established, best-practice medical care is currently legal in Rhode Island and protecting these rights ensures that our local providers, patients, and health care infrastructure aren't negatively impacted by restrictive laws in other states. This legislation is necessary because the hostile laws enacted in other states have the potential to cross state lines and interfere with delivery of evidence-based health care in Rhode Island, which has been shown to have vastly detrimental effects on patients, providers, and health care systems.

As a health care provider, it is extremely important that I have the right to deliver the best care possible to my patients. It is equally important that my ability to do so without fear of repercussions is protected. H7577 has the potential to protect my patients and their rights while ensuring that Rhode Island remains a competitive practice environment. Passing this law will bring Rhode Island in line with 11 states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut. With over 20 states already imposing bans on these essential services, coming out ahead of opposition is crucial to protecting provider and patient rights.

By passing H7577, Rhode Island has an opportunity to affirm its commitment to equality, dignity, and access to healthcare for all its residents. The detrimental effects on patients without these protections is well documented, and includes outcomes such as treatment delays, exacerbation of health conditions, and overall harm to patients' wellbeing which disproportionately effects marginalized communities such as people of color and low-income individuals. Enacting this protection also creates a safer environment for physicians to provide this essential care by protecting providers from legal challenges as well as preventing the long-term challenges faced by the healthcare systems operating without these protections or under legislation which restricts these services. Such outcomes include clinic closures, physician scarcity, litigation, and discipline from state licensing boards. This bill would send a powerful message that discrimination and interference with healthcare access will not be tolerated in our state.

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. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Josiah "Jody" Rich, MD, MPH  
Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology Brown University  
The Miriam and Rhode Island Hospitals  
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Providence, RI 02906  
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*Victoria R. Hashway* 

Administrative Assistant to  
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Leah H. Harvey, MD, MPH

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