

Roberta DiMezza

From: Luca Salerno <lucavalcade@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 10:55 AM
To: Rep. Hull, Raymond A.; House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Stagnation of H7577, "Health Care Provider Shield Bill"

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Representative Hull and members of the RI House Judiciary Committee,

I am a Rhode Island resident, a constituent of Representative Hull's, and a skilled professional with a doctorate in biomedical science. I am writing to inquire why H7577 has stalled in the judiciary committee and to urge the House to join your colleagues in the Senate in passing this bill, which offers necessary protections to prevent health care providers from being sued by out-of-state entities for offering necessary medical care to people in Rhode Island.

As you are no doubt aware, Rhode Island faces a health care crisis where there are not sufficient numbers of providers to enable equitable and timely access to health care for all our residents. At the same time, reproductive health care and gender-affirming health care for the transgender community are both being targeted by many states for legislation that directly interferes with personal medical decisions that should be solely up to individuals/families and their medical providers, and not placed in the hands of the government.

By not passing a shield care bill, Rhode Island risks losing more medical providers and failing to attract new ones, as we are not a large state and every other New England state except New Hampshire has passed legislation protecting health care workers and patients from government overreach.

Additionally, Rhode Island is also losing me due to the House's failure to act. I am exactly the type of resident any state would want: I am a young, highly-educated professional with a good job, so I pay a good share of tax money to the state. I patronize local businesses, attend local events, and participate in community volunteer opportunities and cultural organizations. I am also transgender and moved to New England in 2023 due to my worries about the legislative situation in the Appalachian regions where I previously lived and worked. I moved to Rhode Island because I like it here and because I had faith at the time that the legislature would do the right thing. Unfortunately, I now see that Rhode Island state government lacks the political will to act in support of citizens like me and the expert physicians who provide me with my medical care. I will therefore be relocating to Massachusetts in the fall.

There are many young LGBTQ+ professionals like myself with disposable income and jobs in lucrative fields. We don't have to stay in a state that is not friendly to us. If you want us to leave, then congratulations. However, I think that you will find that you will miss us when we have moved elsewhere and are no longer contributing in all the varied ways that we help make Rhode Island a great place to live.

Best,
Luca Salerno, Ph.D.
262 Fruit Hill Ave #12
North Providence