

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 the owner of Radically Thrive Therapy, LLC. My practice focuses on the mental health care and support of LGBTQAI+ community, specifically transgender and gender non-conforming people. This legislation is very important to me and my health care colleagues, and the clients 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.**

Not only is this a professional cause for me, but it is a personal one too. I have several loved ones that are transgender and nonbinary. Their safety and access to healthcare is

crucial and I wholeheartedly believe all people have the right to receive care and support in their own home 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 at [contact info, only include this if you want your contact info public] if I can provide any additional information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Nikole Barnes, LICSW

Owner

Radically Thrive Therapy, LLC