



**east bay community action program**  
THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

RILWAN K. FEYISITAN, JR.  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*

EAST BAY  
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

East Providence & Bristol County  
Headquarters  
The Dennis Roy Building  
100 Bullocks Point Avenue  
East Providence, RI 02915  
P: 401.437.1000  
F: 401.223.4459

Newport County Headquarters  
Jean E. Hicks Center  
19 Broadway  
Newport, RI 02840  
P: 401.847.7821  
F: 401.847.6220

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Representatives,

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. My name is Quinten Foster, and I am here to speak in support of H7577 on behalf of myself and East Bay Community Action Program. Rhode Island has a long history of protecting the rights and autonomy of both our citizenry and the vital healthcare professionals who keep us all thriving. From banning insurance exclusions of gender affirming care, to ending harmful gender and sexuality conversion efforts, to the banning of Trans Panic as a defense, our state has repeatedly shown that we care deeply about the safety and wellbeing of our LGBTQIA+ residents. The Health Care Provider Shield Act is an incredibly important next step toward the best possible future for our LGBTQIA+ community.

As the Director of Transgender Whole Healthcare at EBCAP, a huge portion of my role is to assist EBCAP in making our LGBTQIA+ patients and clients feel welcome and safe. Helping my community feel affirmed, celebrated, and joyous enough to thrive is something I take great pride in. But it is becoming harder and harder to achieve as we continue to see the impacts of political arguments over gender affirming healthcare and human rights for gender diverse people. The Trevor Project's 2023 US National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People showed that nearly a third of LGBTQ young people reported their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation. The anxiety and dread felt by the gender diverse community is not limited to states with gender affirming care bans. As a transgender man working in queer healthcare, I cannot even begin to tell you the number of patients, parents, families, healthcare providers, and social service providers who have come to me expressing the same fears and dread I am feeling myself. Our gender diverse Rhode Islanders deserve to have access to safe, best practice, legal forms of healthcare including gender affirming care, and our providers deserve robust legal protections from the politicalization of their profession.

Statistically we know that 40% of nation-wide respondents to the 2022 US Trans Survey have considered moving out of state seeking robust LGBTQ+ protections. Anecdotally, anyone working in LGBTQ+ medicine will tell you that people are leaving the field in droves. Queer healthcare professionals are being threatened with media exposure, with bodily harm, with lack of funding for necessary services, and with the criminalization of our jobs and our livelihoods. States like Texas continue to use tactics like subpoenas of private information to intimidate and out trans families and the providers that support them. Not only is this bill the best way to help our gender diverse citizens reclaim some of the peace and safety we have

come to enjoy as Rhode Island residents, but it is also the most responsible way to ensure that our providers, the experts in their field, are adequately protected and able to continue practicing in our state.

Please join East Bay Community Action Program in support of my trans community and the providers we rely on by enacting this bill.

Thank you for your support and attention.

Quinten Foster, MS

Director of Transgender Whole Healthcare, East Bay Community Action Program

