

Chairperson and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I hope all is well and thank you all for your service to RI. I write today, 3.5.24, in support of H-7577, the "Health Care Provider Shield Bill". A bill of this type would have been wholly unthinkable 10 or 20 years ago but is wholly required today. Not since Jim Crow have individual US States incentivized citizens to violate other citizens' rights to privacy and confidential medical procedures. Those states work to impair access to healthcare and, in the most extreme versions, sought to criminalize those who provide necessary and legal healthcare.

Anyone seeking healthcare services in RI should be provided comfort and security while they undergo that care. Providers need to be equally comfortable and secure providing that care. This Bill, H7577, provides exactly that type of protection for those providing healthcare in RI. There is a vociferous minority in the US, driven by the needs of a malevolent deity, who seek to impose theocratic rule, especially on bodies and most cruelly on womxn and minorities.

There was a time when the sentences above would have been laughed at, so implausible their content. But today they are frighteningly accurate. Think for a minute that a State Supreme Court in Alabama ruled that a single fertilized cell is a human being. They relied not on science or even law, but on an ancient text that they cannot read in the original and if they did, they would find much of it has no vowels.

These people are not committed to their fellow citizens, to the United States, not even to this world. Their stated interests lie in an imagined eternity none have ever visited and for which there is no evidence, ruled by a capricious and jealous king. Yet these fantastic beliefs lead them to feel they can righteously restrict other citizens' basic freedoms.

RI must strive to be a bulwark against these anti-democratic, destructive, and vindictive forces. Their pernicious influence has to be met and thwarted at every turn. This bill provides one more stanchion supporting democracy, fairness, and personal autonomy in Rhode Island. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Sean Hagberg, PhD