

March 5, 2024

Dear Chairperson Craven:

I am writing in strong support of H7577, the Health Care Provider Shield Bill. I am a resident physician who will be going on to work in the state post-graduation. This legislation is very important to my health care colleagues and me, and the patients 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 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.

As a pediatrician, I want to be able to make sure my adolescent patients can learn that their doctors are safe places for them to learn appropriate health information related to their bodies. As a child psychiatrist, I want my patients to not have the increased stress of knowing they might not get adequate healthcare.

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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvorn Aswad', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yvorn Aswad, MD

Resident Physician in Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Child & Adolescent Psychiatry