

Testimony in SUPPORT of H7217 and H7373
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Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Chair Craven and honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee,

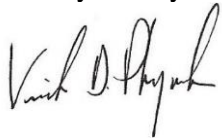
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England with **strong support for House Bill 7373 (Rep. Caldwell) for safe firearm storage and House Bill 7217 (Rep. Knight) for regulating assault weapons.** Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE), provided sexual and reproductive health care to over 7,000 patients last year at our Providence health center. We believe all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

Like me, you've probably felt heartbroken, terrified, and devastated by the horrific news about gun violence. Everyday places like our grocery stores, our schools, and even our streets – in broad daylight – might not feel safe. There is an overwhelming sense of frustration at the lack of action from Congress to address this unspeakable violence with common-sense gun safety legislation. This issue affects all of us. The reproductive freedom and gun safety movements are fundamentally linked. As our reproductive justice partners have said for decades: **There is no reproductive freedom without the ability to raise our children in safe, healthy environments, free from gun violence, and free from harm at the hands of law enforcement.**

Just like abortion bans, gun violence disproportionately impacts Black, Latinx, AANHPI and Indigenous people because of our country's history of systemic racism and discrimination. Often, the same politicians who are trying to take away our right to control our bodies stand in opposition to laws that would protect people from gun violence.

While we continue to push for federal legislation, we can take immediate action in Rhode Island, because our communities can't wait. Right now, our ability to care for our children, protect them from gun violence, and ensure they come home from school unharmed is not guaranteed. To truly defend our right to control our bodies and futures, elected leaders must pass laws to protect us from gun violence. Inaction is not an option. **PPSNE asks this Committee to pass H7217 and H7373 to help prevent gun violence in our state.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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