

**Testimony in SUPPORT for House Bill 5502****AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- GENERAL PROVISIONS****Gretchen Raffa, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer****Planned Parenthood of Southern New England****House Committee on Judiciary****April 1, 2025**

Chair Craven and honorable members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) with **support for House Bill 5502**. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) provided sexual and reproductive health care to nearly 8,000 Rhode Island patients last year. Planned Parenthood believes 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.

People achieve reproductive freedom when they have full autonomy over their bodies and lives — this not only includes access to health care, but it is the ability to live in communities that are not over-policed, the ability to live without fear of having families torn apart, and to live without fear of harm from discriminatory policies. We believe that the ability to live and thrive without fear and the ability to access health care are basic human rights. No one should fear deportation when they seek help or have to think twice about seeking health care, including reproductive health care. Having access to reproductive health care enables women to build stable families, participate in the workforce, and control their destinies. We know what happens when communities who already face barriers in accessing care are driven further into the shadows — they will forgo the care they need to preserve their own safety and economic security for their families.

This bill will send a strong message that our state is working towards addressing discriminatory policies by supporting reducing the maximum sentence for certain misdemeanors from 365 to 364 days. We know these harsh immigration policies at the federal level are underway to detain and deport millions of immigrants, many of whom are part of the Planned Parenthood community -- they are our supporters, patients, and staff. H5502 is one way to help protect vulnerable members of our immigrant community, including asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence, who otherwise could be barred from immigration relief due to a misdemeanor conviction.

As we continue to witness targeted attacks on the immigrant community across this country and at our borders as the Trump administration continues to push their hateful agenda — rooted in racism and xenophobia — it is a moral imperative we act now in our state to intervene to address discriminatory policies and do what we can on the state level to stop mass incarceration and the prison-to-deportation pipeline.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients, and our communities have what they need to live healthy, safer, and self-determined lives and that is why we urge support from the committee for H 5502.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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