

The Honorable Representative Evan P. Shanley
House State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: In support of Bill 6125, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE
LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY**

Dear Chairperson Shanley, and members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

My name is Dr. Chelsea Graham and I am a resident of Providence, Rhode Island. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 6125.

House Bill 6125 is simply a resolution that acknowledges that Rhode Island stands firmly behind the belief that every human being has the right to love freely and live their lives openly as who they are. This bill is not and should not be considered controversial. LGBTQIA+ people, people of color, and particularly trans women of color, face greater disparities in the areas of health, housing, and criminal justice and are many times more likely to be the victims of fatal violence. We have the duty to do all that we can to protect all Rhode Islanders.

I have chosen to stay in Rhode Island for the last 10 years to work as a primary care physician, where I can deliver high-quality, evidenced-based medicine. I am grateful that last year you passed the Shield Bill to protect providers like me. Now, I am asking you to protect all of my queer friends, colleagues and patients who want to continue to live a fulfilling life in Rhode Island.

While the proposed executive orders threaten people in the workplace, in the military and in other realms, I am speaking to you from the lens of healthcare. I am asking you to support LGBTQIA Rhode Islanders. We know that when we take care of our most vulnerable populations, everyone succeeds.

Since this administration started, my days at work have been filled with anxiety, fear and terror. Patient after patient is worried about access to health care, job security and their ability to travel freely in and out of the United States. I try to respond with reassurance, but with the quickly changing climate, I do not always know what to say.

Rather than feeling helpless, I am looking to you and counting on you. I am asking you to affirm the enforceable state protections that already exist.

Thus, I strongly encourage you to quickly vote to pass this resolution, **HB 6125**, to be clear in your commitment to ensuring that all Rhode Islanders have the same rights and protections, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important step forward for Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Graham, DO
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, Warrant Alpert Medical School
Physician at Thundermist Health Center
Providence, Rhode Island