



American Civil Liberties Union of RI
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Catholics for Choice
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)
Hope and Change Partnership
Humanists of Rhode Island
League of Women Voters, RI
Medical Students for Choice
National Council of Jewish Women, RI Action Team
Perinatal Quality Collaborative
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Reproductive Health Access Project

RI Abortion Fund
RI Academy of Family Physicians
RI Athiests
RI Black Business Association
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence
RI National Association of Social Workers
RI National Organization for Women
RI Pharmacists Association
RI Religious Coalition for Reproductive Freedom
RI Working Families Party
Sojourner House
Upstream
Women's Fund of Rhode Island

To: Co-Chairs Senator Euer and Representative Craven and members of the Constitutional Convention Preparatory Commission

From: Nicole Jellinek, Chair, Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

Date: August 23, 2024

Re: Testimony to the Constitutional Convention Preparatory Commission

Dear Members of the Constitutional Convention Preparatory Commission,

The Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom (RICRF) is dedicated to protecting and advancing access to reproductive health care through advocacy and legislative action. As a coalition of organizations, we work collaboratively to share resources, build strategies, and coordinate efforts that link reproductive freedom with social and economic justice. We are guided by the principles of the Reproductive Justice movement, as articulated by SisterSong, which affirm the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, make decisions about having children, and parent in safe and sustainable communities.

We strongly oppose the idea of holding a Constitutional Convention. Over the past five years, RICRF has been a leader in advancing significant legislation, including the Reproductive Privacy Act and the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act. These measures have been vital in ensuring that abortion care is accessible to all Rhode Islanders, regardless of income or insurance status. This year, we proudly collaborated with coalition partners and dedicated legislators to pass the Health Care Provider Shield Act, which provides essential protections for healthcare providers and patients relying on transgender and reproductive health services.

In Rhode Island, where state law already protects crucial civil rights, a Constitutional Convention would be a means for opponents to challenge and potentially undermine these hard-won protections. Such a convention could put at risk the significant progress we have achieved in securing reproductive rights and other essential freedoms. To safeguard the advancements we have worked so tirelessly to achieve, it is imperative that we reject the idea of convening a Constitutional Convention. Preserving the integrity of our existing protections is essential to maintaining the progress we have made in Rhode Island.

For these reasons, the RICRF urges that the Commission recommend against holding a Constitutional Convention.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "njellinek", with a long, sweeping underline.

Nicole Jellinek, Chair, Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom