



August 23, 2024

Rhode Island Constitutional Convention Commission
State House Room 135
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Senator Euer, Representative Craven, and members of the Commission:

My name is Patience Crozier, and I am the Director of Family Advocacy at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) as well as the GLAD liaison to Rhode Island. As you know, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is a legal rights organization that works in New England and nationally to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation. Since the time of GLAD's founding in 1978, we have worked in Rhode Island to promote justice. Most recently, GLAD worked with partners on a comprehensive shield law to protect access to transgender and reproductive health care, a name change law to reduce barriers to legal name change, and to expand access to vital medication that reduces the risk of HIV transmission by close to 100 percent.

Article XIV of the Rhode Island Constitution provides two paths for amending the state Constitution. One of those paths is through a constitutional convention and, every ten years, Rhode Island voters are to determine whether to hold a constitutional convention. GLAD wishes to share with the Commission its great concern about moving forward with a constitutional convention. We have witnessed in recent years increasing, unfounded attacks on LGBTQ people, particularly transgender young people, across the country in the form of anti-LGBTQ legislation and increased violence and discrimination. Rhode Island has, to date, ensured that anti-LGBTQ legislation has not moved forward and has been committed to equality for the LGBTQ community. A constitutional convention creates an opportunity to undermine equality in the state constitution for minority groups such as the LGBTQ community and, through a campaign, to create a poisonous environment for LGBTQ community members. State and community resources are better spent working together to address critical needs such as access to housing and education for all community members.

Respectfully submitted,

Patience Crozier, Esq.