

March 4, 2024

The Honorable Dawn Euer
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: AMA support for SB 2262 and HB 7577

Dear Chairs Euer and Craven:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express support for Senate Bill (SB) 2262 and House Bill (HB) 7577, legislation that would shield physicians and their patients against interference in reproductive and gender-affirming health care decision-making.

The AMA would like to first thank Rhode Island for its commitment to protecting access to reproductive and transgender health care services. We believe that patients should have access to the full spectrum of reproductive care, including abortion care, as well as evidence-based care for gender dysphoria and gender incongruence. Decisions about whether, when, and how to access these services are medical matters between the patient and physician that should be made free of third-party interference. With half of the states now banning or severely restricting access to abortion and/or gender-affirming care, we are grateful to the policymakers in Rhode Island and other states who have stood up for physicians and their patients. Your support helps ensure physicians can provide safe, effective, and evidence-based care to patients in Rhode Island and across the country.

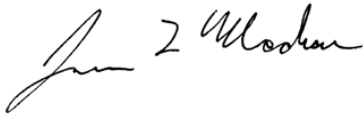
The complex and often inconsistent web of state laws that now governs the provision of reproductive and gender-affirming care across the country raises significant concerns for physicians, even when caring for patients in states where these services remain legal. Much is still unknown about how other states can seek to enforce laws that criminalize medical care and whether the provision of legal medical care in one state can expose a physician to civil, criminal, or professional liability in another state where such care is prohibited.

Protecting the medical community against these risks is essential to ensure continued access to these necessary services. That is why the AMA supports the legal protections in HB 7577 and SB 2262 – two bills that shield those who provide, support, or refer patients for gender-affirming care and reproductive health services and the patients who may seek these services outside their home state. These important protections will help ensure physicians and other health care professionals can continue to put patient care first without fear of interference, retaliation, or legal repercussions elsewhere. These important protections will also help support a robust workforce of reproductive and gender-affirming care providers to meet the needs of patients in Rhode Island.

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We again want to thank you for your support of the physician community and our patients and appreciate the opportunity to express our support for these bills. If the AMA can be of assistance, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, senior attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at or (312) 464-4788 or annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Rhode Island Medical Society