



May 10, 2023

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Re: Rhode Island Senate Bill 0412

Delivered by email to: Lindsay Bazile, Committee Clerk, Senate Judiciary, SenateJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation strongly supports Senate Bill 0412. As longtime advocates for our fundamental human right to personal autonomy, we are too well aware of the increase in already onerous obstacles to accessing judgment-free, supportive, and high-quality healthcare. Discrimination, misinformation, and stigma are the reasons for these human rights violations. The patient's bill of rights created by this bill allows *all* people to know they are protected – and to feel empowered in asserting this fundamental human right.

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit human rights organization dedicated to defending the personal autonomy of all individuals. This includes free speech, privacy, sexual freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, and reproductive freedom.

Rhode Island has a robust history of ensuring patients are protected from unlawful discrimination, and this bill simply expands the categories of individuals who must not be denied appropriate care based on who they are or the work in which they engage.

There is precedent for this expansion in other states; two years ago, the New Hampshire Governor signed HB 1639 into law, which was a healthcare omnibus bill that included similar critical changes to their Patients' Bill of Rights. Furthermore, the Rhode Island Study Commission Ensuring Racial Equity and Optimizing Health and Safety of Laws Affecting Marginalized Individuals, created by House Resolution 5250, is currently in the process of finalizing its recommendations. Access to healthcare has been a critical focus of the commission, and we, as advocates, eagerly await their policy recommendations that will undoubtedly support augmented access to care.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. It is imperative that all citizens have access to accessible and judgment-free healthcare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ricci Joy Levy".

Ricci Levy
President & CEO
Woodhull Freedom Foundation

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Affirming Sexual Freedom as a Fundamental Human Right