



State of Connecticut
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

TO: Committee on Human Services
Representative Jillian Gilchrest and Senator Matthew Lesser, Co-Chairs

FROM: The Reproductive Rights Caucus
Representative Matt Blumenthal and Representative Jillian Gilchrest, Co-Chairs

DATE: February 21, 2023

RE: **Written Testimony in Favor of Raised H.B. No. 6617: AN ACT PROMOTING EQUITY IN COVERAGE FOR FERTILITY HEALTH CARE**

Representative Gilchrest, Senator Lesser, Senator Gaston, Representative Dathan, Senator Seminara, Representative Case, and honorable members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB 6617, An Act Promoting Equity in Coverage for Fertility Health Care**. On behalf of the Reproductive Rights Caucus, I am pleased to share our commitment to policies and programs that support the reproductive health and rights of Connecticut residents, including those seeking to expand their families.

Sexual and reproductive health, like all forms of health, are shaped both by the conditions of one's community and the context of their life. The right to have a child and build a family within safe, sustainable communities is fundamental to those concerns. Access to fertility treatment and services is vital to making that right real for all people, including for single people, LGBTQ+ couples, and those with health conditions that impair their fertility.

However, such treatment and services are currently out of reach for many within our state. Cost is one of the largest barriers to fertility care in Connecticut. Like many other types of health care, paying out-of-pocket is prohibitively expensive for many Connecticut residents. Connecticut's current law requires that some private employers to cover certain fertility care services. However, it fails to cover many people and circumstances. The current law does not cover people insured through HUSKY Health, our state's Medicaid program. In addition, the law is underinclusive, allowing insurers to exclude single people, older people, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

While Connecticut has led on approving insurance coverage for medically necessary fertility preservation, and some private employers have moved ahead in offering comprehensive fertility coverage as part of employee insurance plans, our present law falls short. HB 6617 offers us an opportunity to address existing inequities and injustices around what it means to have a family, in all of its forms.

This is especially critical given that a variety of compounding factors, such as discriminatory and systematic harm in health care, including for reproductive health services, often dissuade or prevent people experiencing poverty, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals from accessing fertility care. HB 6617 addresses these gaps in coverage by ensuring Connecticut residents, including those on HUSKY, have access to these vital services.

HB 6617 will also help bring our fertility law up to date with what it means to have and raise a family in Connecticut. No one who desires to be a parent should be prevented from that joy and responsibility due to narrow and arbitrary legal language. Furthermore, it helps ensure that our community members who experience physiological barriers to fertility, such as due to health conditions and care related to endometriosis, chronic pelvic pain, or hormone replacement therapy, are not forgotten nor excluded.

Connecticut has a long history of leadership on safeguarding the reproductive health and well-being of our residents, and it is time we enshrine such rights and dignity for those dedicated to fostering the next generation. HB 6617 realizes a future where the ability to create a family is no longer determined by one's wealth, sexuality, gender, marital status, disability, or physiology. The Reproductive Rights Caucus is proud to support this bill, which will help Connecticut residents access and afford the fertility care needed to build their families—and their futures.

We thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Blumenthal". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Representative Matt Blumenthal, Co-Chair
On behalf of the Reproductive Rights Caucus