

Senator Maroney, Representative Lemar, and Distinguished Members of the General Law Committee,

My name is Dr. Cara Delaney and I am a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist practicing in Connecticut. **I am testifying in strong support of S.B. 227 AAC An Act Concerning Prescription Drugs and Over-The-Counter Diet Pills and Supplements.** This legislation would offer a critical layer of confidentiality and anonymity for providers of reproductive health care and gender-affirming health care services by allowing the name of the prescribing or dispensing *practice* in place of an individual healthcare provider.

This legislation will bring Connecticut up to the standards of other states that prioritize the reproductive and sexual health rights. Shield laws are part of the armor that protective states can use in the post *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* world – which upended the right for women and people able to become pregnant to have full reproductive healthcare, including abortion care. Since 2022, there have been countless attacks to abortion and gender affirming health care, with restrictive states currently focusing on criminalizing and punishing health care physicians and providers from protective states. These restrictive states are trying to prevent people living within their state lines from receiving safe medications including medication abortion (which accounts for 67% of all abortion care) and gender affirming medications. Patients living in restrictive states are continuing to access this care from protective states, like Connecticut, generally through telehealth. There are ongoing civil and criminal litigation from states like Texas and Louisiana that specifically target health care providers – but because these providers have come from states with much more robust shield laws than what we have in Connecticut, these indictments have not been successful.

As a doctor, my patients ask me questions they would not feel comfortable asking anyone else. Since the fall of *Dobbs* a common question is along the lines of “how can I make sure that my daughter/nephew/neighbor can get the reproductive and sexual healthcare they need as they are moving to a state with abortion bans and sexual healthcare restrictions.” These questions highlight that the community outside Connecticut state lines is vastly important to people that live here. We have to be committed to protect patients in and outside of the state and this bill will do this by expressly protecting health care provider anonymity outside of the state as they are providing telehealth care to our daughters, nephews, and neighbors.

Shield laws like S.B 227 are essential for physicians and health providers in Connecticut giving telehealth care to patients outside of the state. Currently, Connecticut providers are not comfortable doing this practice. While Connecticut was the **FIRST STATE** to enact a shield law after the fall of *Dobbs* in 2022, it has fallen behind in protections for Connecticut physicians and providers as well as patients. Legislation allowing the *practice name* in place of an individual provider on medication labeling for reproductive and sexual health services has already been signed into law in 7 other states. Connecticut has an opportunity to bolster our shield law to include protections for licensed providers providing telehealth care for abortion and gender affirming health.

As an OBGYN in Connecticut, I am committed to ensuring that my patients and my community receive the highest standard of compassionate care. I believe in my patients and that they can make decisions about their health without government inference, regardless of location. S.B. 227 is an essential component to bolstering our current shield law. It sends a clear message that Connecticut will not accept the intimidation and harassment of licensed state medical providers and physicians giving essential, safe, and life-saving health care to anyone who needs it.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.

Regards,
Cara Delaney, MD, MPH, FACOG
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