

Proposed Bill – S.B. 295

Hearing: March 2nd, Judiciary Committee

Bill Title: An Act Concerning State Law Protections for Health Care Providers and Patients Related to the Provision of a Legally Protected Health Care Activity.

IN SUPPORT

Dear Members Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Amanda Rostkowski, MD/PhD. I have been a practicing gynecologist in Connecticut since 2016. I completed my residency training at Yale - New Haven Hospital from 2010-2014. I am also a gender-affirming surgeon and abortion provider. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. 295 An Act Concerning State Law Protections for Health Care Providers and Patients Related to the Provision of a Legally Protected Health Care Activity. This bill will ensure our state continues to do everything in its power to protect Connecticut's healthcare providers, and access to essential reproductive health care services, including abortion, as well as prescribed health care accessed by transgender people and their families.

Throughout my career, I have had the distinct honor of caring for patients during some of the most joyful and stressful times of their lives. I have helped patients that have struggled with years of infertility conceive. I have performed hysterectomies for trans-masculine patients for them to feel more comfortable in their own skin. I have performed abortions for patients who knew they were unable to parent at child that this point in their lives. My job, which I love, has become increasingly more stressful the past few years. Since the *Dobbs* decision, patients are terrified of unintended pregnancy. My conversations with transgender patients are strained because I cannot tell them what the future will hold as far as their access to gender affirming care. These conversations are hard to have in the relatively safe haven of Connecticut. I cannot imagine the conversations doctors are having with patients in Kansas and Texas. My job is to provide the highest level of care for my patients— no matter who they are, where they are from, where they live, or how much money they make. This bill would reaffirm Connecticut's commitment to protecting health care providers here in the state of Connecticut, and strengthen protections for providers in this state to meet this moment, and care for those patients seeking abortion and medically necessary care for transgender people.

There is significant evidence that Telehealth services for abortion and gender affirming hormone therapy work and are safe. By passing this law, Connecticut will continue to lead the way for physicians to practice STANDARDS OF MEDICAL CARE FOR EVERY PATIENT we encounter in our state, whether in person, or virtually. With medicine becoming more and more politicized, physicians are deciding if they can live and work in certain states depending on if MEDICAL STANDARDS OF CARE are legal or not. More restrictive states are losing physicians, specifically OBGYNs. Residency programs in more restrictive states are having trouble recruiting new medical school graduates. With passage of this law, and laws like it, Connecticut can continue to lead the country in protecting its physicians who are just trying to take care of patients, of people, regarding of where they live.

I strongly urge the Judiciary Committee and CT General Assembly to support S.B. 295. By further bolstering Connecticut's Reproductive Freedom Defense Act and our state's shield protections with these added provisions for telehealth providers, Connecticut will be able to offer a critical layer of defense for its dedicated and compassionate reproductive health care workforce seeking to respond to the national public health emergency that is our post-Roe reality.

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



Amanda Rostkowski, MD/PhD