



Submitted Testimony on Raised H.B. 5516: An Act Concerning Reproductive Rights

Distinguished Chairpersons of the Public Health Committee, Sen. Anwar and Rep. McCarthy-Vahey; Ranking Members Sen. Somers and Rep. Klaridis-Ditria, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I submit testimony today as individual physicians and in our leadership roles for the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP) **to express support for Raised H.B. 5516.** ACP is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States, representing over 160,000 internal medicine physicians and related subspecialists, including 2,300 in Connecticut. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply evidence-based scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to lead the multidisciplinary diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness, including conditions related to gender identity and reproductive health.

Providing patients with evidence-based medical information and treatment, including with respect to their sexual and reproductive health, is at the core of a patient-physician relationship that emphasizes individual autonomy. ACP strongly opposes restrictions that would erode equitable access to comprehensive, medically indicated, and evidence-based sexual and reproductive healthcare services. Commensurate with the recommendations of multiple national physicians' organizations, ACP believes limitations imposed by organizations or the threat of punishment should not affect a clinician's decision to provide or recommend care in accordance with these standards.

ACP strongly opposes restrictive policies that impose any penalties for providing, receiving, referring, assisting, or otherwise facilitating clinically appropriate health care services that meet the standard of care, including with respect to gender-based or reproductive health care. Furthermore, ACP believes that third-party interests should not have any role in restricting access to gender-related or reproductive health care services. ACP is supported in this view by a broad coalition of physicians' groups including American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Practitioners.

The health care decisions of our patients on all matters – but especially in matters of sexual and reproductive health – are deeply personal, and are rooted in autonomy, dignity, self-determination, health, and well-being. Our duty is to inform and counsel our patients on the evidence-based options available to them to guide them toward the individual choice in healthcare options that is appropriate. **We urge you to support H.B. 5516 to protect**

healthcare professionals from the threat of undue punitive action related to the provision of the evidence-based, medically necessary care appropriate for our patients.

Sincerely,

Anthony Yoder, DO, MPH, FACP

Co-Chair, Health and Public Policy Committee Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Physicians