



May 8th, 2023

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am a Rhode Island voter and a representative from COYOTE RI writing to you today in strong support of S32 "The Equality in Abortion Coverage Act" Today, Rhode Island law treats the right to abortion according to two different standards: whether you can afford to pay either out of pocket or with private health care for your rights or not. That is not equality. And it is not ok.

We need to get rid of the bans on health coverage for abortion that deny health coverage for abortion for state employees and people who use Medicaid. Women of color are overrepresented in low wage jobs and more likely to use the state Medicaid program which means the state ban on Medicaid coverage disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous and people of color.

Research has shown that for a person struggling to get by, taking away benefits for abortion means they may have to forgo paying for things like rent or groceries to pay for medical care including abortion. This puts people's health and well-being at risk. Decades under these state policies have resulted in too many people and their families pushed further into poverty as they scramble to find the money for an abortion.

Repealing these restrictions will not ensure full equality for poor women and women of color. But doing so is a necessary first step. Anyone who cares about fighting racism and poverty must realize that attacks on abortion—and especially on abortion coverage—are first and foremost attacks on poor women and women of color. We need to get rid of the harmful bans on health coverage.

Please, vote YES on S32. Please, also support the inclusion of this health coverage in the FY 24 state budget. Together we can make sure every person should be able to afford the healthcare they need to plan their families and futures and that includes seeing through our protection for the right to abortion by getting rid of financial obstacles to care.

Thank you.

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