

Government Administration and Elections Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1530

AN ACT CONCERNING GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND THE
PROVISION OF REPRODUCTIVE AND GENDER-AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE

Title: SERVICES TO PATIENTS.

Vote Date: 3/26/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/24/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

There is a growing concern over the erosion of gender-affirming care protections on the federal level and as a national trend. This bill would seek to consolidate existing statutes related to gender-affirming care shield laws. It would also seek provide clarity that the protection from liability extends to telehealth. This would help provide clarity by removing duplicative statutes and explicitly stating that telehealth is covered rather than leaving it as an implication. This would continue to affirm Connecticut's support over the protection of gender-affirming care and retain its status as a safe haven for these practices.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Alma Nunley, Office of the Attorney General, Connecticut:

As attacks continue on transgender individuals, women, and patients targeting lawful health care in Connecticut, we need to protect those residents. We support the bill but request clarifying changes to enhance state shield laws, protect providers from liability, and expand sensitive healthcare information. Our office would like notification when a subpoena seeks information about reproductive or gender-affirming health care information. Transgender

individuals are members of our community, deserve health care, and need protection to the fullest extent.

Sean Scanlon, Comptroller, State of Connecticut:

Throughout 2023 and 2024, we convened a "Healthcare Cabinet" to discuss healthcare challenges facing various demographic populations. The cabinet consisted of policymakers, stakeholders, practitioners, and advocates divided into subcommittees based on population groups who need solutions to healthcare challenges. The Women's Subcommittee supports enhancing the provisions of the Shield Law or the Reproductive Freedom Defense Act. The Shield Law should be expanded to include providers through telehealth, especially those offering medication for abortion or gender-affirming care. This would offer our health care providers more protection caring for their patients. This is a pivotal time for reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare with all the attacks nationwide.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Hannah Hussey, Staff Attorney, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders:

GLAD law appreciates the leadership on issues of reproductive rights, including legislation in 2022 and 2023. This legislation still offers protections for providers from attacks by people from other states. The national climate continues to shift, increasing providers and patient challenges in accessing and delivering needed healthcare. Approximately half of all states have either restricted or banned safe, effective, and medically necessary care for transgender children. Some states have made it a felony to provide the necessary care for transgender young people. Denying medical support to transgender young people puts them at risk of depression, self-harm, and suicidal behaviors. Those that receive the necessary medical care are better situated and lead happy, healthy lives. GLAD law supports strengthening the Shield Law and have specific amendments to further strengthen the bill. We are available for discussions at any time.

Liz Gustafson, State Director, Reproductive Equity Now:

Advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice are central to our mission. Everyone deserves access to healthcare, including abortion, yet this is not a reality for many. In the two years since the Dobbs decision, there is a public health, economic, social, and racial justice crisis across our country. As of 2025, 26 million live in states that ban or restrict abortion and nearly 1 in 5 travels out of state for abortion care. Connecticut proactively passed the nation's first shield law to protect reproductive health care and gender-affirming care. These were strengthened in 2023, but now we need expanded telehealth shield protection to provide medication abortion. We cannot prevent anti-abortion states from targeting Connecticut but now is the time to strengthen our shield laws.

Gretchen Raff, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer, Planned Parenthood:

As the largest provider of sexual and reproductive healthcare, we believe that all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate healthcare regardless of who you are, where you live, or your income. We know the danger and risks patients face when denied healthcare. Pregnant people have been denied lifesaving pregnancy related care in

hospital rooms across the country due to abortion bans. People are dying because of these bans. Many of those states have the highest maternal mortality rates, particularly for Black women. This bill reaffirms Connecticut's commitment to protecting healthcare providers in our state and care for patients seeking reproductive health care.

Connecticut Hospital Association:

CHA supports the concept of the bill but has some concerns. CHA agrees with the change to collapse Sections 52-146x and 52-146w of the General Statutes. Legislation that is intended to shield the state from changes at the federal level is likely to come in direct conflict. If this should arise, we trust the state will protect patient rights while also protecting providers. We are specifically concerned with the new language in lines 89-99:

This new language at lines 89-99 is problematic for several reasons, including.

- The language fails to pick up the clarification in subsection (c) of existing law clarifying the prohibition on data sharing is solely for subpoenaed records but not for other types of requests.
- That distinction is vitally important because without it, patient records would be transformed into mere legal records and no longer be available for routine healthcare uses (an unacceptable and unsafe outcome)
- Requiring providers to inform the Office of the Attorney General about these requests — with no meaningful information and no promise of help — does not assist patients or providers in protecting rights or privacy

The more effective approach would be replacing lines 89-99 with the following:

A covered entity or business associate that receives a subpoena for patient information related to reproductive health care services or gender-affirming health care services subject to the provisions of this statute that does not fall under any exemption in subsection (b) of this statute and is not accompanied by the written consent of the patient or the conservator, guardian or other authorized legal representative of a patient shall provide a copy of such subpoena to the Office of the Attorney General within seven days of receipt of the request. The Office of the Attorney General shall post notice of the methods by which covered entities and business associates may send the copy.

The Office of the Attorney General shall create publicly posted resources that: (1) covered entities and business associates may utilize when communicating with entities or individuals that issued subpoenas without proving patient consent as described in this Section; (2) sample motion to quash language that could be incorporated into a motion to quash filed in state or federal courts, or with administrative tribunals; (3) include easy to understand notices on what is required pursuant to HIPAA and state law that covered entities and business associates can give to requesters including when attestation obligations pursuant to 45 CFR 164.509 are applicable.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Chris Barrett, Gays Against Groomers:

As a former Democrat and volunteer for the National Chapter for Gays Against Groomers, I have testified against the advances of "gender identity" and "queer". This is an advancing and disturbing ideology affecting vulnerable kids, LGB, and women. I am speaking out because

today's LGBTQ+ organizations do not represent me. Activist research pushed by trans gender-promoting lobbyists continues to be discredited. No legal protections should be granted shielding any doctor in this regard.

Jeff Cleghorn, Lambda Legal and Georgia Equality:

As a former US military intelligence officer and former practicing lawyer, you are actively harming children, LGB, and women with this legal rollout. The Family Institute of Connecticut tells us that activist research pushed by transgender-promoting lobbyists continues to be discredited and only benefits the trans medical profit industry.

Simon Amaya Price,

I support R.J. Preece's call for an independent state investigation into the transqueer lobby as it impacts the state, including impact on elected officials and the profitable trans medical market. Instead of "trans as an escape hatch" people should receive psychological counselling and meaningful anti-bullying support.

Mona Colwell:

In my testimony are various studies from:

American College of Pediatricians

Longitudinal Research from Europe

Steensma et al.

Singh

Cass Review

Drummond et al

Ristori & Steensma

Kaltiala-Heino

Hembree et al

Zucker

Jackie Homan, Greenwich Patriots:

Medical professionals are maiming and sterilizing impressionable children. This dangerous trend must end.

Robert J. Hale, Jr, Hale Law Firm:

This bill is retaliatory toward our sister states and is probably not enforceable if not unconstitutional. Not since 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act has there a bill like this. I object to C.G.S. 52-571, and its definition of "Reproductive Health Care Services" because it includes "termination of pregnancy" which is elective abortion. Nothing that intentionally causes the death of a human being is health care. None of the measures imposed by this bill are necessary for the protection of medical interventions. There is more harm than protection in this bill.

Christine Rebstock:

As a transsexual rights advocate in Connecticut, I have testified regarding trans gender and queer matters affecting those in the state. You are harming children, LGB, and women with disturbing legal rollout from activist-lobbyists that are misleading Connecticut politicians. I

refer you to Four National Figures – Amaya Price, Cleghorn, Preece, and Rebstock who call for an independent state investigation into transqueer matters in Connecticut.

Nicholas & Abigail Smith:

As the parents of 3 young daughters, we are concerned with what we are considering legalizing. Children should not have the autonomy to make a decision concerning an attempted change. The bill overlooks the unintended consequences of massive litigation against the state if we perform surgery on out-of-state minors.

Leslie Wolfgang, Director of Public Policy, Family Institute of Connecticut:

This bill makes substantive changes to Connecticut law by incorporating "fertility and assisted reproduction" into the list of services subjected to protections under this bill. This bill is an attempt to break out "gender affirming healthcare services" from the definition of "reproductive health care services. The reproductive rights provision of the shield law is problematic, especially the punishments. One Connecticut gender doctor was exposed for intending to target their services to children in a state that bans gender affirming care. I have included a Myth/Fact sheet in my testimony.

Katherine Sarris:

As a resident of Connecticut and a person who struggled with gender dysphoria due to trauma from sexual assault in my childhood, I am opposing this bill. Proponents of "gender affirming care" claim science is behind invasive medical interventions. I have in my testimony a statement from the American Society for Plastic Surgeons along with numerous studies from Europe, particularly the Nordic countries. Please read about Prisha Mosely and her detransitioning journey.

R. J. Preece:

I call for an independent investigation into the entire (national and international) transqueer lobby, as it impacts the state of Connecticut. You are being misled by activists and the profitable medical community. The trans medical market is worth billions and has its influence in Connecticut. It is supporting eugenics-style mass transing of proto-gay and vulnerable kids for medical profit.

The following also submitted testimony in opposition to the bill:

Jonathan Chechie, Reverend

Beverly Allen

Susan Bradford

Linda Dalessio

Del Jacob, Pastor, First Cong. Church, Woodbury

Marcella Kurowski

Steven Lain

Elle Palmer

Lee Sirotnak

S. Yule

Anonymous

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: April 9, 2025