

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-295 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE LAW PROTECTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF A LEGALLY

Title: PROTECTED HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/2/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

CO-SPONSORS:

Sen. Gary A. Winfield, 10th Dist.

Rep. Kaitlyn Shake, 120th Dist.

Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.

Rep. Matt Blumenthal, 147th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill more explicitly defines the classes of people the shield law is intended to protect, including interstate telehealth protections, and addressing federal supremacy, in line with the Connecticut Trust Act. This strengthens Connecticut's Shield provisions and brings them in line with those adopted by other states with similar laws.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language makes numerous wording changes throughout to increase clarity and specificity.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection: Bryan Cafferelli stated that certain provisions of the legislation – specifically, Sections 11 and 16 – 18 – may

have limited practical application due to existing federal requirements that govern the dispensing of controlled substances. Federal regulations already require pharmacists to dispense controlled substances only pursuant to a valid prescription containing specific information. However, he did express qualified support for the legislation, stating that the Department appreciates the bill's intent to protect legally authorized health care activities. Cafferelli indicated the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) looks forward to working with proponents to provide regulatory context as the bill moves forward.

Alma Nunley and Emily Gait, Co-Counsel for Reproductive Rights, Office of the Attorney General: Alma Nunley and Emily Gait support the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut's shield laws, protecting patients and healthcare providers involved in reproductive and gender-affirming health care that is legal in the state. They argue the bill is a necessary response to increasing efforts by other states and the federal government to investigate, prosecute, or otherwise target providers and patients across state lines. SB 295 would expand existing protections, clarify enforcement mechanisms, and provide additional safeguards - such as limiting disclosure of provider information and strengthening protections against extradition and out-of-state judgments - to ensure continued access to legally protected health care in Connecticut.

Sean Scanlon, CT State Comptroller: Sean Scanlon supports the legislation because it strengthens and modernizes Connecticut's shield law protections for healthcare providers and patients involved in reproductive and gender-affirming health care that is legal in the state. He argues the bill is necessary to address increasing efforts by other states to pursue civil, criminal, or professional actions against providers and patients across state lines. The legislation would expand protections - particularly for telehealth services - strengthen enforcement by allowing recovery of damages and attorney's fees, as well as empower the Attorney General to intervene. It would also enhance privacy and safety protections for health care providers and patients.

Lisa Thomas, Member, State Comptroller's Healthcare Cabinet: Lisa Thomas supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut's shield law protections for providers and patients seeking reproductive and gender-affirming health care. She argues the bill is necessary to protect healthcare providers - particularly those offering care through telehealth - from out-of-state prosecution in states where such services are restricted. Expanding these protections will help ensure access to abortion and gender-affirming care, safeguard patients' well-being, and reinforce Connecticut's commitment to protecting lawful healthcare providers and their patients.

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division: The Judicial Branch raised concerns about the legislation because Section 19 would prohibit Connecticut juvenile courts from returning a child to another jurisdiction when the removal is based on allowing the child to receive legally protected healthcare. They noted this provision could have significant systemic impacts on interstate child protection cases and could disrupt the coordination and jurisdictional processes established under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA). This could potentially complicate how courts and the Department of Children and Families respond to out-of-state custody or removal orders.

Manisha Juthani, MD, CT Commissioner of Public Health: Commissioner Manisha Juthani of the Department of Public Health raised concerns about the legislation related to its

language. She warned that the definition of “legally protected health care activity” is overly broad and could limit the Department’s ability to discipline providers for fraud, malpractice, or substandard care. It could also restrict the admissibility of evidence and subpoena compliance in investigations and create administrative and transparency challenges related to provider records. She also expressed concern that the bill could effectively condone the unlicensed practice of medicine across state lines, potentially putting patients and providers at risk. However, she did emphasize the Department's support for protecting healthcare providers who deliver care that is legal in Connecticut and indicated that the Department of Public Health (DPH) is willing to work with proponents to address these issues.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Matthew Blinstrubas, Executive Director, Equality Connecticut: Matthew Blinstrubas supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut’s shield law protections for healthcare providers and patients seeking reproductive and gender-affirming health care. He argues that the bill is necessary to protect providers from out-of-state legal actions and political interference, particularly as other states attempt to restrict or criminalize such care. It would expand protections for telehealth services, safeguard patient privacy, and ensure continued access to legally protected and medically necessary care for patients both within and outside Connecticut.

Liz Gustafson, Connecticut State Director, Reproductive Equity Now: Liz Gustafson supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut’s shield law protections for providers and patients seeking reproductive and gender-affirming health care. She argues that the bill expands protections to telehealth services regardless of a patient’s location, while enhancing privacy and safety protections for providers. It also safeguards them from out-of-state legal actions or intimidation. These measures are necessary to maintain access to abortion and gender-affirming care and to protect providers from increasing legal threats from states that restrict such services.

Iyanna Liles MD, Vice Chair, Connecticut Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): Iyanna Liles supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut’s shield law protections for providers and patients seeking reproductive and gender-affirming health care. She argues the bill would allow Connecticut physicians to continue providing evidence-based care - including abortion medication and gender-affirming treatments - through telehealth regardless of a patient’s location, while also enhancing provider privacy and safety by allowing the use of facility information instead of personal identifiers on prescription labels. These protections are necessary to ensure continued access to safe and effective care, particularly for patients in states where such services are restricted.

Roxanne McNellis, Director of Public Affairs, Hartford GYN Center: Roxanne McNellis supports the legislation because it would strengthen protections for providers and patients seeking reproductive health care, particularly medication abortion provided through telehealth. She argues that expanding Connecticut’s shield law would allow providers to deliver safe, evidence-based care without fear of legal retaliation from other states and would help patients - especially those in states with abortion restrictions - access timely care. It

would improve access to reproductive health services and protect providers from increasing legal risks associated with providing lawful care.

Gretchen Raffa, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England: Gretchen Raffa supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut's shield law protections for providers and patients seeking reproductive and gender-affirming health care. She argues the bill is necessary to protect providers from legal threats and enforcement actions by states that restrict such care, particularly following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Expanding shield protections - including for telehealth services - would help ensure continued access to abortion and gender-affirming care, protect patient and provider safety. This would reaffirm Connecticut's commitment to safeguarding reproductive and LGBTQ+ health care rights.

Anthony Yoder DO, MPH, FACP Co-Chair, Health and Public Policy Committee Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Physicians: Anthony Yoder and the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP) support the legislation because it protects physicians who provide evidence-based reproductive and gender-related health care from civil or criminal penalties and other forms of liability. Yoder argues that the bill helps ensure patients have access to medically appropriate care regardless of where they live. It also safeguards the patient-physician relationship by allowing clinicians to provide counseling and treatment consistent with established medical standards without fear of punishment or political interference.

Reproductive Rights Caucus, CT General Assembly: The Reproductive Rights Caucus supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut's shield laws to protect providers and patients from out-of-state investigations, lawsuits, or professional penalties related to reproductive and gender-affirming health care that is legal in Connecticut. The Caucus argues that SB 295 is necessary to address increasing efforts by other states to impose liability across state lines - particularly for telehealth services. They also emphasize the necessity of providing clarity and legal protection for Connecticut clinicians. Strengthening these protections will help ensure continued access to lawful care, support the state's health care workforce, and reassure patients that their medical decisions will not expose them or their providers to cross-border punishment.

Ann Reed, Co-Head for Advocacy, League of Women Voters of Connecticut: Ann Reed supports the legislation because it strengthens Connecticut's shield law protections for health care providers and ensures continued access to reproductive and gender-affirming health care services. She argues the bill is necessary to protect providers from interference by other states and allow them to safely provide care - including through telehealth - to patients regardless of where they live. Reed contends that SB 295 reaffirms Connecticut's commitment to protecting legally permitted health care and supporting providers who offer essential medical services.

71 pieces of testimony were submitted **in support** of this legislation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anne LaMonica, Associate Director, CT Catholic Public Affairs Conference: Anne LaMonica opposes the legislation because it improperly expands Connecticut's shield laws to

protect providers offering abortion and gender-affirming treatments. This includes expansion through telehealth to patients in other states. She argues these provisions could undermine interstate comity by allowing Connecticut providers to deliver care to residents of states where such services are restricted and without being licensed in those states. Extending these protections - particularly for telehealth services involving minors - could interfere with parental rights and impose Connecticut's policies on families in other states.

Lisa A. Maloney, President, Connecticut Pregnancy Care Coalition: Lisa Maloney opposes the legislation because it creates interstate legal conflicts by shielding Connecticut providers who deliver reproductive and gender-related medical care - particularly through telehealth - to residents of other states. She argues the bill could undermine other states' authority to regulate medical practice and reduce accountability for providers. This could allow high-risk treatments such as medication abortion and gender-related medical interventions to be delivered remotely without adequate oversight, parental involvement, or safeguards for patients.

Jamie Reed, Director, LGB Courage Coalition: Jamie Reed opposes the legislation because it improperly expands shield law protections to include gender-affirming medical interventions and telehealth services. They argue these should remain subject to greater oversight and scrutiny. These interventions - particularly for minors - carry significant medical risks and that the bill could reduce transparency, limit accountability for providers, and restrict the recognition of out-of-state investigations or custody determinations. Shielding such practices from interstate review could undermine consumer protections and create legal conflicts between states.

Leslie Wolfgang, Director of Public Policy for the Family Institute of Connecticut Action: Leslie Wolfgang opposes the legislation because it significantly expands Connecticut's shield laws in ways that could undermine interstate cooperation and erode principles of federalism. She argues it would do this by protecting healthcare providers who deliver reproductive or gender-affirming care across state lines, particularly through telehealth. It could shield controversial medical interventions - especially gender-affirming treatments for minors - from oversight and accountability, reduce transparency by limiting disclosure of disciplinary actions and provider identification, and create consumer protection concerns. She also raises concerns that provisions related to telehealth, custody determinations, and recognition of out-of-state legal findings could create constitutional conflicts with interstate custody laws and federal requirements governing recognition of court orders between states.

18 pieces of testimony were submitted in opposition to this legislation.

Reported by: Justin Lamoureux

Date: March 31, 2026