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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

**TESTIMONY ON 23-H 5428,
RELATING TO LICENSING OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES
February 28, 2023**

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this bill, which would prohibit the denial of appropriate medical care to individuals based on various irrelevant characteristics. While current state law bars discrimination against patients on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or source of payment, this bill would update the law to cover – appropriately, in our view – additional categories of protection, including sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and profession.

It should go without saying that medical professionals and facilities have an obligation to treat their patients – and prospective patients – in a non-discriminatory manner. In the past decade, the General Assembly has taken numerous steps to protect individuals from arbitrary discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and similar characteristics, and in applying these protections to the medical field, this bill represents just one more step in the state’s recognition of the need to update and expand anti-discrimination laws to ensure equal treatment in professional settings.

For these reasons, the ACLU supports the passage of this legislation and urges its approval. Thank you for your time and attention to our views.