
National Association of Social Workers

220 West Exchange Street, Suite 007
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
Telephone ■ 401-274-4940
Facsimile ■ 401-274-4941
rhodeislandnasw@gmail.com
www.rinasw.info

Date: February 23, 2016
To: House Corporations Committee
Re: In Support of H - 7467

I am writing in support of H – 7467. This testimony is in line with our **“Family Planning and Reproductive Choice”** official Policy Statement developed through a lengthy and intensive process by thousands of social workers nationally every three years at the Delegate Assembly. Below are highlights and justifications for our position. I have only included positions which directly apply to this piece of legislation. I would be glad to provide the Policy Statement in its entirety, along with any other policy statements upon request.

Excerpts from the *Social Work Speaks 10th Edition 2015 – 2017*, NASW Press.

POLICY STATEMENT

The NASW position concerning family planning, abortion, and other reproductive health services is based on the bedrock principles of self-determination, human rights, and social justice:*

- Every individual, within the context of her or his value system, must have access to family planning, abortion, and other reproductive health services. The use of all reproductive health services, including abortion and sterilization services, must be voluntary and preserve the individual’s right to privacy.
- Every individual, within the context of her or his value system, must have access to family planning, abortion, and other reproductive health services.
- The nature of the reproductive health services that a client receives should be a matter of client self-determination in consultation with the qualified health care provider furnishing them.
- Public policies and legislation, nationally and internationally, must support a woman’s authority over her sexual life and reproductive capacity, free from coercion, violence, and discrimination.

**(Does not include all Statement in policy. Edited for this testimony brevity purposes and relevance to legislation being considered.)*

AVAILABILITY OF AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

NASW supports the fundamental right of each individual throughout the world to manage his or her fertility and to have access to a full range of effective family planning and reproductive health services, regardless of the individual's income, marital status, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or residence; these services include, but are not limited to, contraception; and emergency contraception; fertility enhancement; prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, STIs, and the human papillomavirus (HPV); prenatal, birthing, and postpartum care; sterilization, abortion services, and adoption rights.*

- A woman's right to obtain an abortion, performed according to accepted medical standards and in an environment free of harassment or threat for both patients and provider
- Reproductive health services, including abortion services, that are confidential, available at a reasonable cost, and covered in public and private health insurance plans on a par with other kinds of health services (contraceptive equity)
- Improved access to the full range of reproductive health services, including abortion services, for groups currently underserved in the United States, including people with low income and those who rely on Medicaid to pay for their health care, adolescents, individual challenges and needs, sex workers, single people, lesbians, people of color and those from non dominant ethnic and cultural groups, those in rural areas, and those in the many counties and municipalities that currently do not have providers of such services
- Public and private adoption services that better address the needs of birth parents and that invite women and men, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression, to consider adoption as a genuine alternative to abortion or parenting, contributing to a broader range of options national, state, and local public awareness campaigns and educational programs relating to reproductive health and choice.

**(Does not include all Statement in policy. Edited for this testimony brevity purposes and relevance to legislation being considered.)*

Legislation

Recent years have seen many initiatives at the state and federal levels to challenge and thereby overrule or undermine the rights granted by the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade (1973) decision and subsequent high court decisions. Federal and state legislative bodies have sought to refunding for abortion and other reproductive health care services and research and impose restrictions to impede the use of services, while Congress has restricted or eliminated funding to developing countries.

Therefore, NASW*

- Supports legislation to facilitate a woman's access to contraceptives and emergency contraception.

- Supports legislation to ensure that women who have been sexually assaulted have access to emergency contraception.
- Supports legislation that ensures privately and publicly funded health insurance coverage includes access to all forms of reproductive health technologies, contraceptives, vaccinations, and medication equally for men and women.
- Opposes government restrictions designed to limit access to reproductive health services, including abortion services.
- Opposes government restrictions on financing reproductive health services, including abortion services, in health insurance and foreign aid programs.
- Opposes any special conditions and requirements imposed on reproductive healthcare providers, such as the prescribed warning of unsubstantiated health risks resulting from abortion or mandatory waiting periods, which are not based on medical standards.
- Opposes legislative or funding restrictions on medically approved forms of contraceptives and emergency contraception.

**(Does not include all Statement in policy. Edited for this testimony brevity purposes and relevance to legislation being considered.)*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at rhodeislandnasw@gmail.com or phone 401-274-4940.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick Harris, LICSW
Executive Director