

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6617

AN ACT PROMOTING EQUITY IN COVERAGE FOR FERTILITY HEALTH

Title: CARE.

Vote Date: 3/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/21/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Ceci Maher, 26th Dist.
Rep. Jeff Currey, 11th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Under existing law, not everyone has equal access to fertility care that would support Connecticut residents from starting a family. This includes LGBTQ+, single individuals, and those who receive HUSKY coverage. Removing these current barriers and promoting equity in fertility care will ensure that fertility coverage is provided regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship status, or health insurance. This bill will provide equitable health insurance coverage for fertility health care to those insured through private insurance and Medicaid.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner, Andrea Barton Reeves; opposes this bill stating that adding coverage for fertility treatment services would result in a significant increase in Medicaid expenditures, and funding to cover such an expansion was not included in the Governor's proposed budget. It is stated that Medicaid currently provides reimbursement for family planning services. It is also stated that current DSS regulations prohibit reimbursement for infertility treatment services under Medicaid.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative, Jeff Currey; supports this bill stating under current CT law, both LGBTQ+ and single individuals have been excluded from fertility care coverage as well as residents who receive coverage through HUSKY. It is stated the high costs of fertility treatments have been restricted to those who do not have access to private health insurance, and it is time to address this inequality by expanding fertility care coverage.

Reproductive Rights Caucus, Co-Chair, State Representative Matt Blumenthal; supports this bill stating this will fix healthcare cost inequalities as the current law does not cover people insured through HUSKY Health and allows insurers to exclude single people, older people, and LGBTQ+ individuals. It is stated addressing these gaps will allow residents to build families without having to worry about systemic and discriminatory barriers. It is stated Connecticut has been a leader in safeguarding reproductive health for residents and it is time to do the same with fertility health care.

ACLU CT, Policy Counsel, Jess Zaccagnino; supports this bill stating it counters many injustices and discriminations by expanding its definitions of infertility and fertility patients to include LGBTQ+ people. It is also stated that reducing the barriers that people of color, working people, LGBTQ+ people, and others face when seeking fertility treatments will promote equal access to reproductive healthcare.

American Society of Reproductive Medicine, President, Michael Thomas; supports this bill stating it addresses the inequities many come across when building their families. It is stated medical intervention using donor gametes is necessary for same-sex couples to have a baby, the lack of insurance coverage creates an unfair financial burden on this population.

Center for Reproductive Rights, Human Rights Counsel, Jorie Dugan; supports this bill stating every person should be able to make their own decisions about their health and their bodies. It is stated these decisions should include their reproductive life, whether to have children, when to have children, and how many children to have. It is stated increasing equitable access to fertility care for all residents will address barriers low-income families and the LGBTQ+ community have been facing.

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, Policy Manager, Nicole Sanclemente; supports this bill stating it removes barriers to fertility care and ensures Connecticut residents have equitable access to the reproductive care they need to build their families. It is stated clarifying and codifying insurance coverage for medically necessary fertility preservation is essential for individuals if an individual faces a medical diagnosis that could impair fertility such as cancer patients or transgender individuals.

Fertility Within Reach, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Davina Fankhauser; supports this bill stating it will bring equity to fertility healthcare. It is suggested that [changes be made to this bill](#) as the current language may inadvertently limit fertility healthcare. It is stated language is critical when closing insurance loopholes as fertility treatment is a time-sensitive matter.

GLAD, Director of Family Advocacy, Patience Crozier; supports this bill stating that the proposed legislation would expand exclusivity to all families by requiring insurance coverage for LGBTQ+ and single individuals who need medical care to build their families and those

who are diagnosed infertile. It is stated that those on HUSKY health insurance will not also be excluded and will provide clarity in insurance coverage for fertility preservation.

Planned Parenthood, VP of Public Policy & Advocacy and Organizing, Gretchen Raffa; supports this bill stating all people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care. It is stated that Medicaid's lack of coverage for fertility care has a disproportional impact on women of color and contrasts with the coverage it provides for maternity care and family planning.

Pro-Choice Connecticut, State Director, Liz Gustafson; supports this bill stating it will eliminate barriers to fertility care and ensure residents in Connecticut have equitable access to the reproductive healthcare they need to start or grow their families.

RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association, President & CEO, Barbara Collura; supports this bill stating the existing fertility law has a heteronormative definition of infertility based on heterosexual intercourse that excludes LGBTQ+ persons and single people who want access to reproductive care.

Resolve New England, Executive Director, Kate Weldon LeBlanc; supports this bill stating it will eliminate barriers to fertility care and ensure that more Connecticut residents have equitable access to reproductive care. It is stated this would improve fertility treatment accessibility for many Connecticut residents who are dreaming of growing their families. It is also stated updating the definition of infertility will allow more inclusivity.

Tight Lipped, Community Organizer, Jenna Bergmann; supports this bill stating the fight for reproductive choice has to include the power to decide when and how to start a family, and for far too long, poor people, disabled people, queer people, and people of color have run into barriers when they try to exercise their reproductive autonomy.

Yale Medical School, MD, Sal Almohammed; supports this bill stating children who suffer from devastating diseases deserve to be helped and save their chances to have children in the future.

Yale School of Public Health, MD/MPH Student, Cassie Crifase; supports this bill stating that eliminating barriers to fertility care will safeguard that all Connecticut residents have equitable access to the reproductive health care they need to build their families.

Yale University, Graduate Student, Adora Svirak; supports this bill stating it is a step forward in ensuring that everyone has a true reproductive choice, including knowledge about their bodies, access to medical help, and the conditions necessary to decide when and if to have children.

Connecticut Resident, West Hartford, Ami Chokshi; supports this bill stating she would like to see as many people receive fertility care benefits as possible, and several single people and LGBTQ+ individuals would benefit from the passing of this bill.

Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Charlotte Andrews; supports this bill stating that Connecticut has allowed poor people, disabled people, queer people, and people of color to

run into barriers when they try to exercise their reproductive autonomy. It is stated it is time for the state to be a leader when it comes to fertility care.

Connecticut Resident, Norwalk, Kim Forte; supports this bill [speaking from past experience](#) as a lesbian woman trying to get pregnant. It is stated that passing this law will attract people to Connecticut as it shows how the state invests in true equity and inclusion for single parents by choice regardless of orientation and gender identity and for LGBTQ+ couples.

Connecticut Resident, Milford, Madelyn Sweedler; supports this bill stating as a former cancer patient, she was offered egg retrieval, but was on Medicaid and could not afford the procedure out of pocket. It is suggested that storage be expanded to until age 30 or 10 years after retrieval.

The following individuals have submitted testimony in support of this bill. It is stated expanding insurance coverage to patients with Medicaid provides assurance that this procedure will continue to be covered by codifying the requirement to cover their care into law, provides guaranteed insurance coverage for the storage fee for eggs and sperm, and further protects LGBTQ+ families. It is suggested that storage be expanded to until age 30 or 10 years after retrieval.

Connecticut Resident, Branford, Ariel Kruger
Connecticut Resident, Branford, Ross Merkin
Connecticut Resident, Fairfield, Yuxin Liu
Connecticut Resident, Fairfield, Alla Vash-Margita
Connecticut Resident, Madison, Dr. Maryam Lustberg
Connecticut Resident, Madison, Nathaniel Robinson
Connecticut Resident, Milford, Katherine Winkle
Connecticut Resident, Monroe, Brittany Busser
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Norin Ansari
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Laura Baum
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Eric Chang
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Ecem Esencan
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Kristina Fanucci
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Veda Giri
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Adriana Kahn
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Dr. Ellie Proussalogou
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Rozalyn Rodwin
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Rita Sartor
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Dr. Andrea Silber
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Thejal Srikumar
Connecticut Resident, New Haven, Dr. Eric Winer
Connecticut Resident, Southport, Pamela L. Kunz
Connecticut Resident, Westport, Mary-Jane Hogan
Connecticut Resident, Westport, Vidya Puthenpura
Connecticut Resident, Woodbridge, Asher Marks
Connecticut Resident, Niketa Shah

5 individuals have submitted testimony anonymously in support of this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Resident, Mary Baudro; opposes this bill stating she will only support legislation that supports life from conception to natural death.

Connecticut Resident, Debbie Esposito; opposes this bill stating she does not want her taxpayer dollars to fund someone else's fertility. It is stated that tax dollars should be going toward getting people to be financially stable within society.

Connecticut Resident, Theresa Gambardella; opposes this bill stating it is a gross misuse of taxpayer funds.

Connecticut Resident, Kristina Gillespie; opposes this bill stating taxpayers and individuals in insurance pools should not be held responsible to pay for procedures that help infertile people achieve pregnancy.

Connecticut Resident, Gerard Luczak; opposes this bill stating that Connecticut tax dollars would be better spent on programs that address homelessness and mental health.

2 individuals have submitted testimony anonymously in opposition to this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:

Connecticut Association of Health Plans, Executive Director, Susan Halpin; took no position on this bill stating any new mandate passed after 2011 would require the state to cover the costs. It is stated that updating the definition of fertility patient is not opposed and appreciates the intent. It is also stated the proposed provisions may have a financial impact on premiums.

Reported by: Riley St. Pierre

Date: April 12, 2023