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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 16-H 7467,
AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE**
February 23, 2016

As an organization that has long supported reproductive freedom and the fundamental rights of privacy and personal autonomy that underlie *Roe v. Wade*, the ACLU of Rhode Island supports H-7467, which would repeal two statutes that, though largely found unconstitutional by the courts, remain on the books.

Since the 1980's, the ACLU of Rhode Island has successfully challenged – at great expense to the taxpayers – no fewer than seven anti-abortion laws enacted by the General Assembly. That list includes the two contained in this legislation.

One of the laws would have required insurance companies to provide abortion coverage in their policies only as an optional rider, at an additional premium. The only goal of this law was to impose an unnecessary and undue burden on women, and it never took effect due to court orders.

The other law being repealed by H-7467 was partially struck down a long time ago. As enacted, it would have barred the state and municipalities from providing their employees health insurance plans that included coverage for abortion. Although a court ruled that that the state could decline to use its own funds to provide its own employees with abortion coverage, the court also held that the state had no right to impose this restriction on municipalities, although the statute still reads otherwise. As a result, local or municipal employees currently receive abortion coverage through their negotiated health benefits while state employees are barred from such coverage. Since a public employee's access to reproductive health insurance coverage should not depend on whether they work for the state or a municipality, the ACLU encourages repeal of the entire statute.

In sum, it's time to remove these outdated, inappropriate statutes from the books. We urge the Committee do so by approving this bill. Thank you for considering our testimony.