



COVID-19 UPDATE: The Action Quarterly stands as a snapshot of the important work being done by Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island (PPV!RI). While the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted some of this work, PPV!RI is using every resource to adapt our advocacy and organizing work to meet the moment that this crisis demands of us. While many things remain uncertain, including the 2020 legislative session, one thing remains clear: our mission at PPV!RI – and your support – is more urgent than ever before. Even while we practice social distancing, we are keeping up the fight to ensure Planned Parenthood patients and everyone’s sexual and reproductive rights are protected during this crisis – and once we are past this emergency, we will be back to complete the work outlined below.

Legislative Session Update

While just last year Rhode Island made history by passing the *Reproductive Privacy Act of 2019* and protecting the right to abortion in Rhode Island, our work isn’t done yet. We won because we worked together, mobilized our movement, and raised our voices to keep politicians out of decisions about our bodies and our futures. We are eager to get back to work when session resumes and continue the progress we’ve started.



On March 4th, we held a press conference and Lobby Day event with our partners in the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom to support the ***Equality in Abortion Coverage Act of 2020 (S 2476, H 7618)***.

This legislation would remove harmful bans that prevent more than 300,000 Rhode Island state employees and people who are enrolled in the state’s Medicaid program from using their insurance to cover abortion. This bill is crucial because we know the right to abortion is meaningless if you don’t have access to affordable sexual and reproductive health care, and lack of insurance coverage represents a substantial barrier.

Additional policy and legislative priorities:

- **Medicaid Coverage and Certification for Perinatal Doula Services:** campaign to provide coverage for doula care led by Doulas of Rhode Island, Sista Fire, Rhode Island Kids Count and others (S 2124, H 7587)
- **Protect Access to Contraception:** legislation to codify the *Affordable Care Act’s* prohibition on cost-sharing for preventive services and contraception into state law (S 2390) in partnership with the Rhode Island Protect Our Care coalition
- **Explanation of Benefits Reform (EOB):** bill to protect patient privacy and give everyone the confidence to safely use their insurance (S 2532)
- **Implementation of *The Reproductive Privacy Act*:** work to monitor the issuance of new regulations by the Rhode Island Department of Health after the passage of the RPA
- **Improve Rhode Island’s sexual education requirements** by mandating curricula on consent and safe relationships (H 7508)

Photo: (Left to Right) Brittany Fonteno from PPV!RI joins Senator Bridget Valverde (D-35) and Representative Liana Cassar (D-66), sponsors of the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act of 2020, for a press conference hosted by the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom.



Protecting Immigrants' Rights in Central Falls

Last year, concern struck Central Falls (a one-square-mile city with a population of 20,000) when Wyatt Detention Facility, a private prison, began once again housing detainees for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The owners of Wyatt were profiting off the inhumane detention of undocumented immigrants by ICE, who paid the facility for each bed occupied by an ICE detainee. For Central Falls, the national headlines about ICE hit especially close to home since the town's residents are more than 50% Latino/a/x.

PPV!RI organizer Yanine Castedo, working alongside the Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island, began the fight to protect the people of Central Falls. The first step was asking the community "how do we address this and put the community at ease?" and "how can our collective efforts validate and be sensitive to what it was like to be an immigrant in the community during that time period?"

In the summer, 10 bilingual volunteers led canvassing events, petition drives, and community surveys to inform residents of their rights and to listen to their experiences and feedback. The proposed "Community Policing and Immigration" ordinance, sponsored by City Councilor Jessica Vega (Ward 5), outlined policies to protect immigrants from federal immigration agents and prevent local police from collaborating with ICE.

A pivotal moment of engagement came when the Central Falls police department gave their support of the ordinance. Activists and supporters presented powerful testimony at a community hearing and the city council **unanimously** passed the ordinance

Stay in touch
during
COVID-19!



last fall—an inspiring victory that helps protect Rhode Island's immigrant community!

Your support helps make all our victories possible. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights something we've known all along: our broken system continues to threaten the health and safety of our immigrant community. Stories like this show us why we have to keep up the fight—an important reminder during this crisis and in a crucial election year.

Connect with GenAction!

Are you following us on social media? If not, you're missing out! We'll be posting updates from our **Generation Action** interns from across the state, including Sam and Emerald, both freshman at the Community College of Rhode Island, who have taken their work off campus and online! Follow us on



Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @ppvotetri to learn more about how your contributions help these amazing interns organize around sexual and reproductive rights and health on campus and in their communities - and now virutally, too.

Sam, a PPV!RI GenAction Intern

Current Rhode Island 100 Voices Members. *100 Voices for Planned Parenthood is a group of bold philanthropic leaders who share a fierce and unapologetic passion for protecting sexual and reproductive rights and who have made a gift of \$1,000 or more to PPV!RI. **Give now** to add your name!*

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