



new hampshire

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chairman Cavanaugh and the Senate Commerce Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 486

Date: February 18, 2020

Position: OUGHT TO PASS

Background

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in equality and opportunity for women and girls through research, education, advocacy and philanthropy. Along with our predecessor organizations the NH Commission of the Status of Women, The NH Women's Lobby and the NH Women's Policy Institute we have been a consistent and leading voice in New Hampshire for the advancement and the protection of the rights of women and girls for more than 50 years.

We strongly support access to safe, legal abortion for women and teens and we align behind public policies that not only protect the right to abortion, but also those policies that remove geographic or financial barriers and thus ensure that right can be exercised.

While the most important implication of SB 486 is to fulfill a woman's ability to make decisions about her reproductive life, improvements in abortion access will also effect economic outcomes for women and their families. Deciding whether and when to have a child is THE most consequential decision relative to a woman's lifetime economic well-being, so it is important that all choices, including abortion, are available to those who face unintended pregnancy. Women who are denied abortion for financial reasons go on to experience economic hardship and economic insecurity lasting for years and impacting the next generation.

By removing financial barriers to access and ensuring coverage SB 486 will promote greater economic security for New Hampshire women and families in three keys areas:

- 1) **Lowering Fertility** – Delayed childbearing and reduced fertility allow women to invest more heavily in their human capital, including increased schooling and job training which contribute to greater long-term economic security.

- 2) **Increasing Educational Attainment** – women who have access to abortion have higher rates of high school and college graduation.¹
- 3) **Labor Force Participation** – It takes 4-years on average for a woman to return full-time to the workforce after childbirth following abortion denial².

The Impact of Abortion Access under SB 486 will have a Two-Generation Effect³

Abortion Access not only has economic benefits for the pregnant woman, but also benefits other children (born previous or subsequent) in her household: lower rates of poverty and receipt of public assistance, and increase in high school graduation and college attendance. Moreover, these children are less likely to become single parents or access public assistance as adults. Access to abortion contributes to the economic mobility of women and is critical to disrupt the cycle of poverty between generations.

Conclusion

Abortion access is a critical tool for women to further their education, strengthen their economic security and improve their ability to parent existing children.

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation encourages your support for this bill and is committed to work further with legislators, insurance companies and women's health advocates toward enactment. We thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and urge you to support this proposal.

Respectfully Submitted

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¹ Angrist and Evans, "Schooling and Labor Market Consequences of the post-1970's State Abortion Reforms", In Research in Labor Economics, 2000, pp75-113

² Bernstein, Anna and Jones, Kelly, "The Economic Effects of Abortion Access: A Review of the Evidence ", Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2019

³ ANSIRH, 2019 Introduction to the Turnaway Study. UCSF www.anshirh.org