



new hampshire

## **WOMEN'S FOUNDATION**

**To: Chairman Lynn and the House Judiciary Committee**

**Re: HB 224, repealing the criminal and civil penalties from the fetal life protection act**

**Date: February 15, 2023**

**Position: OUGHT TO PASS**

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in equality and opportunity for New Hampshire women and girls through research, education, advocacy and grantmaking.

We support HB 224 because we believe maternal health providers should not be threatened with criminal penalties for doing their job.

Threatening doctors with felony charges and imprisonment creates a chilling effect that leads to difficulty in hiring and retaining providers in New Hampshire, and HB 224 would reduce this harmful effect of the Fetal Life Protection Act.

### **Trust Women and Their Doctors**

We trust women and their doctors. When women and their care providers face complex circumstances later in pregnancy, they need the expertise and care from their doctors. If doctors are not trusted to do their jobs, women and pregnant people will suffer from barriers to care.

### **Weakening New Hampshire's Maternal Health Workforce**

There is no other profession in New Hampshire that has been criminalized like abortion care providers have in the Fetal Life Protection Act. When providers are prohibited from providing care guided by the best interests of their patients, we create a chilling environment by sending the signal that New Hampshire is not a friendly place for OBGYNs. We heard from hospital systems last year that OBGYN recruitment and retention is already difficult, especially in rural areas, and that the criminal penalties in the Fetal Life Protection Act would worsen this problem because OBGYNs would rather practice in more friendly states. A lack of OBGYN or midwife providers will lead to worse maternal health outcomes in New Hampshire.

### **Conclusion**

We urge the Committee to reduce the harm done by the abortion ban and recommend HB 224 Ought to Pass.