



new hampshire

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chairman Carson and members of the Senate Judiciary

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 181: relative to reproductive rights (Access to Abortion-care Act)

Date: January 31, 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 believe SB 181 Ought to Pass because access to the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, is crucial to women's health, economic security, and long-term impacts on women and their families.

New Hampshire Context in the Region and Country

The "Live Free or Die" state has had a long, bipartisan history of supporting abortion access, however, New Hampshire is the only state in New England that has not protected the right to abortion in state law. The June 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women Health Organization* eliminated the federal right to abortion and left access up to the states. Though abortion is legal up to 24 weeks in New Hampshire, the people of this state deserve to know that the legislature will protect the right to safe, legal abortion amid a rapidly changing landscape in the rest of the country.

Reproductive Health Care is Crucial to Women's Health

We support SB 181 because we believe women, and people who can become pregnant, have the right to make decisions about their bodies, their families, and their lives. Not only is the choice to end a pregnancy a right, but it is, for some, a means to economic prosperity, safety and the ability to flee violence, and the opportunity to pursue dreams and develop thriving communities. In New Hampshire, women are more likely to live in poverty, with a gender wage gap that increases by race, ethnicity, and county, and are more likely to have been impacted by interpersonal and/or sexual violence. These indicators of well-being are all significantly impacted by the ability to make reproductive decisions, including abortion, for oneself. We must protect the right to abortion to continue to support women's autonomy, health, wellness, economic security, and ability to support thriving families and communities in New Hampshire.

Economic Impacts of Limiting Access

The autonomy of women and people who can become pregnant to make decisions about their reproductive health, improvements in abortion access is crucial. Also crucial are the economic impacts 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 an abortion go on to experience economic hardship and economic insecurity,

lasting for years and impacting the next generation. Providing access to all reproductive health care including abortion will promote greater economic security for New Hampshire women and families in three keys areas:

- 1) **Long Term Economic Security** – Control over reproductive health allows women to invest more heavily in their potential, including increased schooling and job training, which contribute to greater long-term economic security. Women who have access to abortion have higher rates of high school and college graduation.¹
- 2) **Labor Force Participation** – It takes 4 years on average for a woman to return full-time to the workforce after childbirth following abortion denial.²
- 3) **Multi-Generational Impact** – Abortion access not only has economic benefits for the pregnant person, but also benefits other children (born previous or subsequent) in her household: lower rates of poverty and higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance.³ Access to abortion contributes to the economic mobility of women and is critical to disrupt the cycle of poverty between generations. When women are healthy and prosperous, their families succeed and our communities grow stronger.

Conclusion

Access to reproductive health care, including abortion, provides opportunities for women to further their education, strengthen their economic security, and improve their ability to parent existing or future children, if they choose. New Hampshire should join the rest of New England in assuring that Granite Staters will continue to have access to abortion.

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