

Testimony in support of: P.R.1 - Right to Privacy Amendment
Senate Committee on Government Operations, February 9, 2016
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) in support of P.R.1. PPNNE strongly supports Vermonters' right to access reproductive health care and legislative efforts to strengthen Vermonters' ability to access this right. Policies and laws in Vermont must reflect what the public understands to be true: that each person has a right to privacy, including the right to make decisions concerning his or her body.

For more than 40 years, the U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that the Constitution protects every woman's right to make her own personal medical decisions about abortion. On March 2, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *Whole Woman's Health, et al. v. Cole et al.* If the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the Texas clinic shutdown law, it could create a world where even though abortion is legal, it is completely out of reach for many women, and the consequences for women will reverberate far beyond Texas. It will mean that even though abortion is legal, it is effectively banned for many women. This cannot be what it means to be a woman living in 21st century America. This cannot be what it means for people living in 21st century Vermont. A person's right to make personal and private medical decisions about their own body shouldn't depend on location or income.

As the state of Vermont's largest reproductive health care provider, we are supportive of this proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution because it constitutionally recognizes Vermonters' cherished right to privacy, promotes sound public health policy, and assists in protecting Vermonters' access to health care for generations to come.