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March 20, 2018

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Over 7 million men and women in the United States, and over **13,000 in Vermont**, face the disease of infertility. 1 in 8 couples have trouble getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy, and many turn to assisted reproductive technology (ART) to make their dream come true. LGBTQ individuals and couples, and others, also turn to ART or other paths to parenthood to build their families. Holding these Vermont residents in mind, RESOLVE New England (RNE) is proud to testify in support of **H. 562 - An act relating to parentage proceedings.**

Founded in 1974, RNE is a non-profit organization that has provided support, education and advocacy for all those in New England that are striving to build their families. We believe that parenthood is a fundamental human aspiration, and our purpose is to help people as they seek to make this a reality. Dealing with the disease of infertility can be enormously challenging - physically, psychologically and financially. Many individuals and couples rely on the availability of ART, such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF), to become parents. Some utilize third-party conception such as donor egg, donor sperm, or surrogacy. Our focus at RNE is on providing support and education that enable people to cope as best they can with these intensely emotional experiences, as well as to make informed choices about building their families.

Medical advancements in family building have often outpaced the language in state law, and Vermont is no exception. Without carefully developed and reviewed laws, legal uncertainties exist related to the parental rights and responsibilities regarding children born from assisted reproduction. For example, a couple that conceives a baby using an egg donor and gestational carrier, with the strong desire to parent, should be recognized fully as that baby's parents. H.562 would provide stability and clarity for ALL children and families.

This legislation will not only benefit the so-called "non-traditional families" that are impacted directly but also will be cost-effective for the state as it will reduce the need for some court hearings.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony regarding H.562. RNE looks forward to assisting in any way that we can be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Weldon LeBlanc".

Kate Weldon LeBlanc
Executive Director