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Hi Julie - Below is a letter to the H.H.S. Committee as a whole. I have sent each of them a letter, but I am sending it also to the committee and would like it to be entered into the record. Thank you.

Dear H.H.S. Committee:

My name is Dotty Ricks. I am a proud Vermonter for almost 30 years and am a resident in Barre Town. I am writing in support of Prop. 5, which would amend the constitution by adding an article protecting reproductive choice. This article would affirm the state of Vermont's commitment to citizen rights of privacy and to a woman's right to SAFE, LEGAL reproductive choices. I want you to know from a very personal standpoint why it is so important to affirm these rights through constitutional amendment.

I am a child of the 60s and I remember with deep horror as a young woman helping with friends and family members to secure safe pregnancy terminations, at one point driving up to 14 hours to find that care, and fearful of what lay ahead - police barricades, incarceration, who knew! Dead in a pool of blood from a botched self-abortion, the photo of Geraldine Santoro will live in my memory until the day I die. It was a clarion call to us that this could not and should not happen in an enlightened and decent society. I was fortunate to find providers who, at great risk to themselves and their professions, chose to help women have safe pregnancy terminations. I want you to know that I never met a woman who went through a pregnancy termination lightly or with little thought.

There are many reasons to support this article and I want it passed so that my daughter, if necessary, and other young women that we love, never have to face the horrors we did as young women. We cannot go back to those frightening times. This article brings us one step closer in assuring Vermonters that SAFE, LEGAL reproductive choices will be available to them, and that health care choices can be made in the privacy of doctor and patient consultation.

I also want to point out that one result of the current national administration is that hundreds of judges are being replaced on the bench by party ideologues, many who, like their leaders, do NOT have the best interests of or even respect for

women or the constitution. I believe that passing this article will confirm, that at least in Vermont, we uphold the constitution, the right of privacy, and beyond that support the women that live in and contribute to making this great little state so great. Please, I strongly encourage you to support Prop. 5.

Sincerely,  
Dotty Ricks