

Testimony: Support for H.57, an Act Relating to Preserving the Right to Abortion
Vermont House Committee on Human Services

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Greetings Chairperson Pugh, Vice Chair Haas, Ranking Member McFaun, and members of the House Committee on Human Services.

I write to express my support for bill H.57, an Act Relating to Preserving the Right to Abortion which would codify abortion rights in Vermont law.

I am alarmed by the ardent anti-abortion movement we are witnessing in our country especially as it impacts both domestic and international reproductive rights including access to abortion. I have seen our federal government seek to limit or impose limits on what doctors can discuss with their patients; attempt to dictate the constraints of reproductive discussions with doctors; remove relevant women's health information from government websites and appoint officials with fervent anti-abortion attitudes. I am alarmed as I have witnessed abortion access in many states become more and more restricted, abortion access for minors requiring costly, elaborate, and time-consuming approvals whether with a guardian/parent or through a court order, and abortion access limited by fewer and fewer providers. I am alarmed.

Receiving accurate, complete information about all reproductive options, allows women the best possible decisions for their families. And this includes access to abortion. This topic is personal for me, not because I have elected an abortion, but because I have witnessed in my family and with several friends the important place abortion care has had in their lives. I have witnessed difficult, gut-wrenching medical decisions being made during pregnancy. I have witnessed challenges in finding clear, accurate and comprehensive information about abortion. I have witnessed the consuming emotional strain in defending a difficult decision to family, friends, and hospital staff and boards. These challenges were in other states but I have witnessed a national movement to add additional restrictions.

The time has come to protect these rights here in Vermont because I trust women. Families are stronger and women are healthier when they, in consultation with their health care provider as defined by H.57, can make their own reproductive choices. When women are given comprehensive and accurate information, women consistently make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

Lastly, I wish to say a word about the religious opposition to abortion rights. As a United Methodist, I believe in the sacredness of life and the well-being of a mother and the unborn child. And I am guided by our Social Principles that state *“We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers...”* (United Methodist Social Principles, paragraph 161K). I believe that all life is sacred and that a woman retains the right to determine what is best for her sacredness. I am person of deep faith who is both be for safe, unrestricted abortion rights and for reducing the number of abortions by working to reduce the unintended pregnancies with comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education, by advocating for access to contraception and by supporting enhancing the quality of life of all women and girls. Improving and protecting life, at all stages, includes full reproductive justice.

I thank you Chairperson Pugh for co-sponsoring this important bill and thank my representatives George Till and Trevor Squirrel for signing on as well.

Respectfully,

Tracie Wolford Wright