



Vermont Businesses
for Social Responsibility

Economic Empowerment, through access to fundamental Reproductive Rights, presented by VBSR

January 29, 19

Introduction

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) is a business association with over 700 members who advocate for policies which support workers, our communities and the environment. VBSR supports universal access to health care that is accessible and affordable. By reforming our health care system, Vermont could take a leadership role in business attraction, retention, and success.

This includes the fundamental right to freedom of reproductive choice, without public entities interfering or restricting the right of an individual to choose or refuse contraception or sterilization or to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to obtain an abortion.

VBSR Recognizes the wealth of data connecting women's unrestricted access to reproductive health care to their ability to contribute to the prosperity of their communities; by improving their ability to invest in education and training and their ability to participate in the full-time year-round workforce.

VBSR urges the legislature to advance legislation that will support women's ability to participate in the Vermont labor force to their highest potential:

"Women and girls comprise 51% of Vermont's population. Overall, women make up 45% of Vermont's full-time workforce and 71% of its year-round, part-time workforce. 33% of adult women hold a Bachelor's degree or more – six points higher than the U.S. average of 27% and four points higher than Vermont men." *Change the Story Vermont, 2016 Status Report "Women, work and wages in Vermont"*

Of the number of complicated factors that contribute to a woman's financial well-being and ability to work full-time year-round, access to comprehensive reproductive health care services is a very important one:

In a survey of 2,094 women receiving services from 22 family planning clinics located throughout the United States: respondents reported that birth control use had allowed them to take better care of themselves or their families (63%), support themselves financially (56%), complete their education (51%), or keep or get a job (50%). " *Report: Reasons for using contraception: perspectives of US women seeking care at specialized family planning clinics.*" 2013

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Today, family planning is the most effective way an individual can close their lifetime earning wage gap. Highly educated women receive the greatest economic benefit from delaying childbearing.

“By delaying having a first child until her late 20s or 30s, a woman can mitigate the family gap and contribute to her family’s strengthened economic stability” *Report: The Social and Economic Benefits of Women’s Ability To Determine Whether and When to Have Children, Guttmacher Institute 2013*

State laws restricting access to reproductive health services, including abortion, place unfair financial burden on the individuals seeking those services, causing them to incur the cost of excessive travel – including missed work days. Denial of abortion services can limit their ability to participate in both the labor force and marketplace for years.

“women denied abortions who gave birth had higher odds of poverty 6 months after denial than did women who received abortions; women denied abortions were also more likely to be in poverty for 4 years after denial of abortion. Six months after denial of abortion, women were less likely to be employed full time and were more likely to receive public assistance than were women who obtained abortions, differences that remained significant for 4 years. Women denied an abortion were more likely than were women who received an abortion to experience economic hardship and insecurity lasting years. Laws that restrict access to abortion may result in worsened economic outcomes for women.” *Report: Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States, AJPH Research 2018*

Respectfully Submitted,

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