

## Proposal 5 Public Comments

Dear Vermont House Committee Members,

I am writing to express my concerns about Proposal 5, the 'Reproductive Freedom' Bill. I believe men and women already have the freedom to choose when they have children and how many children they reproduce. The actual issue being debated is whether we should have the right to abort a baby when a woman does not want to be pregnant.

To abort a baby is to end a life. One who supports the right to have an abortion is one who supports the right to kill a baby. I believe we should not have the right to abort a baby and end the life of any child in the womb, at any stage of a pregnancy.

We should be protecting human rights and the right to live with dignity. All human lives have value, and all lives are precious at all ages. When our actions harm and destroy another human life, that is where we should draw the line in making our laws for Vermont citizens. Abortions destroy countless lives; therefore, our laws should oppose all abortions.

You may be wondering why there is a shortage of people in the workforce lately- not enough truck drivers, electricians, restaurant workers, teachers, health care workers, etc. Did you ever stop 🤔 to think that during the past 48 years, if men and women had not aborted their babies, we would have thousands more twenty-, thirty-, and forty-year-old people who would be filling those jobs and helping our communities right now?!!

So, I urge you to do what's right to help protect lives of the unborn, uphold a constitution that protects its citizens, and consider the future consequences of these decisions. Please vote no against Vermont's Proposal 5.

Sincerely,

Beth Nelson  
East Ryegate, VT 05042

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Dear Vermont Legislators,

Please support Proposal 5.

All possible reasons are valid for an individual, couple, or family in Vermont to decide or need to seek abortion care. That abortion care ought to be safe, accessible, affordable, comprehensive, and solidified in the constitution.

I am a young professional in our beautiful state, and I am trying every day to stay hopeful about living out the long-term future I have envisioned for myself here. However, until public investments are made that would help all Vermonters meet their basic needs and thrive (e.g.: paid, universal family and medical leave; affordable, accessible, quality, childcare with great working conditions and offered beyond "business hours"; Medicaid for all; access to postsecondary education; quality job opportunities with more than livable wages and room for growth; affordable, quality housing and options for homeownership; etc. and \*without benefits

clifs\*), I would definitely need to seek abortion care in the event I became pregnant. And I know I am not alone.

Thank you for reading and for your dedication to making Vermont a viable place for all people to live in reproductive freedom and to make the best choices for themselves.

FYI: The link on your website to sign up to testify wasn't working. Thus, I'm sending the gist of my testimony in this email.

Gina Pandolfo  
Huntington, VT

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I wish to register my opposition to Prop 5, now before your committee.

Back in 1970, then speaker of the House, Thomas Salmon, presided over a similar public forum as you are conducting this evening. At that time (pre Roe v. Wade) the State of Vermont was debating whether or not Vermont should follow suit with New York State, which had legalized abortions. The forum was conducted fairly with each side given the right to present their viewpoint on an alternating basis. I represented a group from UVM where I was student at the time, and was accompanied by my Professor, Raul Hilburg, the renown Holocaust scholar, who spoke about what happened in Nazi Germany when abortion was legalized and used to exterminate so called undesirables from German society. Sadly, what he warned us about then, has come to pass in America, specifically, the estimated 80% of Down syndrome babies that are aborted. Participants were every bit as fervent they are today in defending their stance on the issue with a broad cross section of speakers ranging from various clergy, educators, medical people, several different age groups, but mostly, just plain citizens. I will never forget that evening because it was democracy at its finest, even though we were not the ones who would actually be voting in committee. Before Vermont made any drastic changes to the law, (much less the constitution!) the Supreme Court issued its now historical ruling which made any state laws moot. I would maintain that we are now in similar circumstances since the Court is now poised to rule on one or more state laws that appear to conflict with the 1973 decision. What is the big rush to pass such a controversial law as Prop 5 NOW before we hear from the nation's highest court? Why not let the Court sort things out for the country as a whole and THEN, individual states, including Vermont, can pass their own laws in the light of the latest ruling from the Court. The original decision was made by nine men without the benefit of the scientific advancements that have been made over the last 49 years and with no female Justices offering their perspective. Let's hear what the Supreme Court has to say with three, and now likely FOUR, women on the court. I urge restraint in passing such a controversial measure at this point in time.

John Angier  
Colchester, Vermont

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Hello,

I wanted to write in and express support for the proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution regarding the right to personal reproductive liberty. I would not be alive today if it weren't for safe, legal abortion care. Abortion rights, and reproductive rights more generally, are essential to a free and fair society. Pregnancy should never be forced on someone against their will. Regards, Mara Satink Essex, VT

We agree with Mr. Kell's statement below and urge a "no vote to Prop 5"

"Our brains need to form beliefs. So how is it that a common set of accepted rational scientific facts can lead to different moral judgments? (NY Times – June 19,2005, The Ethical Brain by Michael Gazzanigo)

We are all aware of the continuity and potentiality arguments having to do with when life begins vs. a fertilized egg going on to become a person, thus deserving the rights of an individual...

However, of late, as new information arises, there is a need for us to "vet our beliefs and not maintain them after receiving corrective information. (Annie Duke)

Thus, what is the science?

Dianne N. Irving , MA, PHD Feb. 1999, Princeton EDU) adamantly maintains that the

"fertilization itself refers to the initiation of a new human being, made from 2 human parents. She is emphatic that the zygote is the beginning of a new human being producing specifically human proteins and enzymes.

The issue is therefore not when does life begin but when does the life of every human being begin. Science says that the human embryo is formed of fertilization and is a whole human being, not just a blob of the mother's tissues. It is a genetically unique product of chromosomal re-assortment.

It is an actual human being with the potential to grow bigger and develop its capacities. It is already genetically a boy or a girl.

Scientific fact: It is an individual person NOT the myth of a "pre-embryo" since scientifically there is no such thing. The immediate product of fertilization is a human being, a human embryo , a human child.

Ideas have concrete consequences in one's personal life and also in public policy. Don't base these ideas on scientific myth but rather on objective scientific facts.

We must challenge our own assumptions, human lives are at stake....

Vote no for proposition five. "

Linda Lev Michael Kell

I wish to speak against Proposal 5 for many reasons:

- (1) There is no provision for moral or religious exemption from participation in abortion
- (2) There are no standards included for those performing abortions. Under this amendment an abortion could be performed under substandard conditions
- (3) There are many people who would like to adopt unwanted babies
- (4) I believe terminating the lives of unborn babies is wrong

Edward Chase, Westford, VT

Dear members of the Vermont Legislature,

I know this is probably too late, but as a citizen of Franklin County, Vermont, I wanted to make my voice heard. I am against Proposition 5 for many reasons, but I will tell you only one of them, and her name is Casey. Casey is our office manager in Enosburg, and has been for fourteen years. She is the heart of our veterinary practice and is very good at her job. She keeps us moving in the various directions we need to go and is excellent with clients on the phone. Besides that, she is a loving mom of four girls, and a grandma to two little ones. She is smart and pretty and has a wonderful laugh. Our world is better with her in it.

Why am I telling you about Casey? Her mother became pregnant with her when she was a teenager. She could have aborted her, but she didn't. For that, I am so glad.

When I think about abortion, I look at Casey and think of all the people who aren't in the world because their life was ended in the womb. It is such a great loss for Vermont, for businesses and for families.

Please consider carefully what you are writing into law, as it will affect many lives in the years to come, and Vermont will miss out on the beauty and love and contributions to society that could have been.

Respectfully,

Julie Kyle of Fairfield

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Chair Pugh and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

I'm writing in strong support of the Reproductive Liberty Amendment.

In the conversation about access to reproductive care, and especially abortion, opponents bring up adoption as an alternative to health care. As a domestic infant adoptee, I find this offensive and ill considered.

My existence as an adoptee is not an excuse to deny reproductive health care to other people, or to force an individual to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term.

Reproductive health care is about the decision to become or remain pregnant, to become a parent or not. Adoption is about the decision about whether to parent one's child, or permanently sever ties with their child and hand them over to strangers. They are not interchangeable decisions.

Beyond this, the Reproductive Liberty Amendment would ensure that horrific practices such as forced sterilization will never take place in our state again.

Please pass this amendment so Vermonters can decide at the ballot box in November.

Thank you,

Ellie Lane, Braintree

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For the love of life and the pursuit of happiness. We already have safe abortions in this state of Vermont and across the nation. This is an all-out war on woman who are pro-life and the murder of full-term babies. We are their voice. I am listening to you all live right now and this whole testimony was a set up and you know it! Shame on all of you. Almost all women who spoke were in favor of prop 5 except for a few men who were against prop 5. This was purposely designed this way and it is not the first time. Where were their no live women testimonies against prop 5? Who and why do you support this bill and how does it protect life? We all know that medical breakthroughs can have a 22-week-old baby survive outside the mother's womb, where is their protection in this bill?

My story started in the year 1982. I was 14 years old and my sister was 13. A 17-year-old boy took advantage of my sister by telling her if he pulls out his penis out of her vagina before he ejaculates, she will not get pregnant. Well, 3 months later she did become pregnant. As a sister I noticed her body was changing, her menstrual cycle stopped and her breast were very large and as a sister you notice these body changes and I told my mother. My mother literally dragged my sister to the doctor and confirmed the pregnancy. My sister came home and my mom decided for my sister that she would get an abortion. My sister went kicking, screaming and crying because she did not want to go and to have her baby murdered.

When my sister came home after the abortion, it was me who stayed home from school to console her and listen to her cries of emotional and physical agony. After this my sister was never the same. That day I lost my sister. It is horrible to stop and rip a developing child out of female womb. I asked what does this do mentally. It has scared my sister emotional and mentally for life. She has cried many tears for the son she was never able to raise or hold. Her life continued only down a dark and evil road. She turned to a life of drugs like crack cocaine, marijuana, drinking alcohol heavily, turned to prostitution to support her habit and was also rapped. She also had 2 more children who both became victims of child molestation because of her drug addiction and had more abortions.

Years later, my mom who was a supporter of abortion had regrets. My Mom broke down emotionally crying and poured her heart out to me. She has one regret and it is forcing her daughter, my sister to have an abortion and murdered her first grandson. It is the one moment in her life she would have changed. My sister continues to be a very hateful, unloving and bitter woman who still uses drugs to cover her pain. To this day she has never healed from the life that was taken from her womb. He was a boy, her son! If she had given birth to her son and held him, what could her life been like today?

Having abortions full term is not about the Vermont Constitution and you know this. This is not about Pro-life or Pro-choice. This is an all-out war on pro-life women and those who protect life. Before you make a decision on proposition 5, I would like to ask you all to go to an abortion clinic and visually watch how babies are brutally taken out of a women's womb beyond 24 weeks of pregnancy. Planned parenthood has countless testimonies and accounts of charges for being exposed for their horrific abortion practices and they have become a place of selling fetal and baby body parts to the highest bidder. Shame on us for even considering the murder and the shedding of innocent blood of 9-month-old babies being ripped out of the mother's womb. May God have mercy on your soul for those supporting this horrific unconstitutional bill! This state demands my body, my choice except when it comes to medical decisions for masks and vaccines mandates? You are a bunch of hypocrites!

Please respond to my questions, Mrs. Sonja Blodgett

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in today to express my strongest support for PR5. My name is Dr. Delzer and I recently moved to Vermont to pursue my residency in obstetrics and gynecology. One of the components that drew me to make Vermont my home is the ability for me to learn about and provide full spectrum family planning options to my community. I have now settled in Swanton and gotten to know the lovely patient population that walks through the University of Vermont Medical Center. One of the beautiful things about being a physician is the opportunity to get to know patients and use the tools I've spent my life developing to help them in some way. I recently was in my clinic and had a 25 year old woman sitting in front of me in tears. A positive pregnancy test landed her in my office to discuss options given her complex situation. This patient had long been struggling with alcohol use disorder and was terrified of quitting for fear of seizures and relapse as we often see in people who drink heavily. She acknowledged that her drinking would be harmful to a fetus and was reluctant to carry on with pregnancy. Without much support at home, raising a child with her other health conditions would be challenging at best. Here she sat, afraid to even be at the doctor's office for fear of judgment about her disease, ready to discuss what could be done. And there I sat, able to tell her that I was glad we could finally get her some help in quitting drinking and that choosing to terminate the pregnancy was not just an option for her, but a safe option. We discussed her strong desire to raise a family someday, just not yet. We agreed that she needed to lean on her doctors to help her stop drinking, and once she was ready and healthy she could choose to pursue pregnancy again. Luckily for her, a positive pregnancy test led to her detox and recovery. Luckily for her, she had options. Luckily for her, she didn't have to pursue pregnancy with a fetus that would develop abnormally and would be welcomed into an unstable home. This patient represents lots of other patients- people with other health conditions or social situations that would make being pregnant and having a child more challenging. We see it all of the time, and often times these folks want to be pregnant, just not now. With the freedom to counsel them on preventing pregnancy in a form that best works for their health and lifestyle, and provide options to them when they do become pregnant, we are truly able to serve our community best. This is why I support reproductive freedom, and this is why I am asking you to vote in favor of PR5. Our patients, our community, and your constituents depend on it.

Thanks,

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I would like to join with the **many** that **oppose** a Constitutional Amendment that would allow the taking of a baby's life to birth! This proposal is so ambiguously written that there are no regulatory premises at all that offers any protection for the women or the child.

- A. This would legalize the killing of human beings, who cannot speak for themselves, through birth.
- B. Abortions could be done by any practitioner that is not qualified under State Regulations.
- C. Doctors and nurses that feel this is wrong should not be compelled to participate in abortions.

- D. So many, many instances show that women are emotionally and physically damaged by abortion. If we were interested in protecting women, this isn't apparent as written.
- E. We may find ourselves promoting and paying for sex changes as well as abortions which is clearly not right.
- F. We don't have enough workers for the jobs in our State or Students for our classrooms now, why limit our population?
- G. We will be losing another member of society that is needed to keep our Nation great!

The biggest issue is the **Women's Rights, but how about the Child's Rights?**

William J Scott Jr  
North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473

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Dear Committee Members,

As a parent of school aged two children, I know what a huge commitment both pregnancy and parenthood is. Before my two kids were born, my water unexpectedly broke at 18 weeks of pregnancy. The fetus continued have a heart beat after several days as I developed a potentially life threatening infection and I was lucky to access excellent care in which labor was induced to protect my life and my ability to carry future pregnancies. In situations like mine and for many other personal and contextual reasons, every person should be able to control when and how they become, stay and carry to term a pregnancy.

Thank for accepting my comments in support of the Reproductive Liberty Amendment. .

Sincerely,

Jill Rubin

Hartland, VT 05048

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I support Proposal 5 to ensure reproductive liberty for all individuals. We need this amendment to the Vermont Constitution to protect every Vermonter's rights to privacy and control over their own health decisions.

Judith Raven

Shelburne, VT 05482

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Dear Committee Members;

My name is Dr. Gnendy Indig, and I am a resident in Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Vermont Medical Center. I am writing today to share the story of one of my patients, to highlight how critical it is to allow our pregnant patients to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures. For the purpose of this story I'll refer to her as A.M. She is a 24-year-old woman who came to the emergency department reporting nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and was subsequently diagnosed with an urinary tract infection. During her workup, her pregnancy test came back positive and an ultrasound demonstrated a 6 week 3 day pregnancy. In conversations with the patient, she revealed that she is currently homeless and was sexually assaulted 6 weeks ago. The Ob/Gyn team was consulted to set up ongoing care for this patient. I went down to the emergency department where I met the patient to discuss her thoughts about her pregnancy.

She and I had a wonderful conversation about her son, who is 1.5 years old and is currently in the foster system. She described how her son being born really altered the trajectory of her life, and expressed being very grateful for his foster Mom for letting her be a part of his life. I asked her about her thoughts about her current pregnancy and she teared up. She explained that the father of the child is an ex-partner of hers who has been physically and sexually abusing her for a few months. She had been working hard to find a place to live and a new job so that she no longer will need to rely on him for food, shelter and protection. She was devastated at the idea of being connected to him through a child. I asked her if she had considered her options. I explained that we would love to support her in any decision she makes in her pregnancy and that we can either set up an appointment for an initial prenatal visit or talk about termination options. She explained how ever since her son is born she philosophically opposes abortion but remained conflicted. We discussed that there is no need to rush the decision. I updated her contact information in our system, set her up for a follow-up visit in 2 weeks and gave her our contact number if she had additional questions. One week later she re-presented to the emergency department. The father of the baby found out that she was pregnant and he tried to strangle her. Per the initial triage notes "he punched her entire body, tried to pick her up by the neck and tried to strangle her." She got her appropriate care, left a statement with the police and requested to talk to us again. She discussed that she wants to pursue medication termination. We set her up with an appointment later that week and she underwent an uncomplicated medication assisted termination.

It is patients like this who will most be affected by increased restrictions on termination. Patients who are financially and socially secure will always know how to access the healthcare they need. It is patients who are struggling who will have their access and healthcare denied when they need it most. We, those who provide healthcare for Vermont's vulnerable populations, implore you not to make it more difficult to provide necessary and safe abortions to our patient.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to write on this topic and for your continued support of women's health, reproductive justice, and for trusting women.

Gnendy Indig, MD

PGY-1 Obstetrics & Gynecology

University of Vermont Medical Center

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A person's a person, no matter how small!"

Dr. Seuss ("Horton Hears a Who")

Diana Tierney

Montpelier, Vermont

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this email because of my concern regarding Proposal 5.

I am concerned because I believe it opens the door for unregulated abortion on demand throughout all nine months of pregnancy up to the day of birth.

I do not want that to happen.



Also, Proposal 5 is vague at best. To quote Rob Roper from Vermont Biz, "It supposedly protects women's rights and abortion rights, but it doesn't mention anywhere in its language the words "woman" or "abortion"."

Also, to quote Roper again, "The authors of Proposal 5 bent over backwards to placate the most extreme elements of today's politically correct gender special interests, but in doing so they crafted a constitutional amendment that is weirdly unclear and dangerously unspecific about what it is supposed to do."

Please do not pass Proposal 5.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Daniel Marcy

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The House Committee on Human Services will hold a public hearing on Proposal 5, proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Vermont regarding the right to personal reproductive freedom, on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the House Chamber and on Zoom."

While I won't be able to participate in person, I want to offer an amendment to the proposal. Rather than solidifying the right to "reproductive freedom," please expand prop 5 to solidify the right to "medical freedom."

Rationale:

No person on Vermont should be subject to health care treatment bans, mandates, or other bureaucratic health care directives outside the will of the patient and their chosen health care provider. This should include the patient right to try, right to access any health care service requested if able to find a provider who will perform it, and should include the right of all persons in Vermont to refuse unnecessary or invasive medical treatments, including compulsory vaccination to attend, visit, or otherwise participate in programs or services funded by taxpayers.

In short, Vermonters stand for the right to choose what is best for them. We don't co-parent with the government, and the government does not own and should not attempt to ever control the bodily autonomy of Vermonters.

Please share this written testimony with all who need to hear it. Medical freedom and bodily autonomy must prevail in the face the tyranny.

Thank you.

Fallon Clark

I am writing in support of Proposal 5. All people should have the right to choose what they do with their own body. Period.

Issues surrounding personal reproductive freedom can be the most important decisions a person makes in their lifetime. To deny that freedom is denying a fundamental human right. To have state or other interference in these very personal choices is tyranny.

I am in full support of this proposed amendment to the Vermont constitution regarding the right to personal reproductive freedom.

Wendy Hybl Fannin  
*Tinmouth, Vermont*

To the Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

Proposal 5 should not be made an amendment to our VT Constitution. Our Constitution of the United States has stated that the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable, that government's job is to protect those rights. The seeming purpose of this proposal is to allow some individuals to legally dismiss the rights of vulnerable Vermonters in favor of their own. The wording "personal reproductive autonomy" is purposely vague, the document does not use the term "abortion", and will not be limited to abortion in its application. It is obvious that lawyers will be able to interpret the vagueness in the future as the legal right to use human sexuality, human reproduction, and the products thereof for profit and exploitation. Vermont already has H.57 in place legalizing abortion up through birth without regulation or restriction. I believe women are being deceived into believing Prop 5 promotes their freedom, when in reality it is to further legalize any lucrative profiting off of the vulnerable of our society - men, women, and children (born and pre-born).

Shouldn't Vermont (with its government) be known as a place that supports and displays vibrant Life, instead of as a place that encourages and legalizes exploitation for profit?

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Burke  
Castleton, VT

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Dear Members of the House Human Services Committee,

I am writing in support of Proposal 5 in my role as a family physician with a special interest in reproductive health. In addition to general primary care for patients of all ages, I provide a full range of obstetric and gynecologic services within the scope of Family Medicine. This includes prenatal care, attendance at vaginal deliveries, postpartum care, management of early pregnancy loss, medical and procedural abortion, contraception counseling and procedures, colposcopy, endometrial biopsy, and diagnosis and management of many other gynecologic concerns. I am the curricular lead for the University of Vermont Family Medicine Residency gynecology rotation, taking primary responsibility for teaching our physicians-in-training a patient-centered approach to this intimate and sensitive area of medicine.

As I observe threats to reproductive liberty passed as law across the United States, I feel grateful to practice in Vermont, where pregnant people can access abortion services without restriction. I am able to support adolescents in practicing autonomy as they make decisions about contraception and whether or not they want to continue an unexpected pregnancy. If I see a woman who has made the decision to end her pregnancy, I am able to provide medication or a procedure to help support her decision on the same day. I can provide the full range of options

to patients experiencing early pregnancy loss. Because Vermont recognizes the skills of Advance Practice Clinicians (nurse practitioners and physician assistants), patients can access abortion services easily at our Planned Parenthood affiliates without waiting for the one day of the week or month when a physician is available, as is the case in many other states.

I am curious about what might constitute “a compelling State interest” that could justify denial or infringement on Vermonter’s right to personal autonomy. I have difficulty imagining a situation that would warrant this exception.

Thank you for this response to the targeted regulation of abortion providers that we have seen increase over the past several years. I am gratified to live in a state that recognizes that medical decisions are best made between patients, who best understand their own unique life circumstances, and medical providers, who have the knowledge and experience to provide evidence-based guidance through difficult situations.

I will be teaching residents this afternoon and may not be home by the beginning of the hearing. If it would be helpful to speak with me in advance of 6 pm, I can be contacted by mobile phone at 508-494-5121.

Thank you

**Clara Keegan, MD**

Associate Professor of Family Medicine  
RHEDI Program Director  
Pronouns: she/her/hers  
(802) 847-8500  
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The University of Vermont Medical Center

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Hello,

I would like to add my vote of support for the this law to protect women and their choices concerning termination of a pregnancy. The idea that any government can mandate rights over a persons body is from the dark ages. We live in a progressive era with many more critical concerns at hand. It feels very dangerous to even have conversations about governing peoples bodies, what type of precedence does this set forth into the future generations.

Thank you,  
Emily Medley

fully support this constitutional proposal. I am of the generation of women that did not have access as young women to safe and legal abortions.

I personally know 2 women that had life threatening or traumatic experiences getting abortions through clandestine 'clinics' and questionable providers.

I also strongly believe that this necessary procedure should be available to all women, and that by limiting accessibility in one state, it just means that women without financial means will not have access, while women that do have financial means will travel and find a way to achieve their goal of pregnancy termination. This is not only not fair, women that have children that they are not wanting or prepared to care for eventually will lead to tremendous costs both to the health and life opportunities for the woman and child and increased costs for the public financially and otherwise.

Please support Proposal 5. Thank you for your time.

**Molly Fleming**

Burlington, VT 05401

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My name is Delia Warnecke, my story is one of many who are Silent No More about the death of our children through abortion.

Whatever any battles any of us have suffered there is never justice in promoting vice. To all Vermont Legislatures of whom let themselves believe it is kind to assist a new mom in an unplanned pregnancy by encouraging her to end the life of her child by promoting abortion, please know this, abortion is not a "right". Abortion is severely unnatural. It is death to an innocent person. It is dangerous to the mother's emotional, physical, and spiritual health; it is the severing of a unique person's life from her own womb—a place in the state of Vermont that presently is the most unprotected place to be!

In the year 1983, the worst year of my life—although so ironic because I was at least able to keep my life, I found myself in a crisis pregnancy. The fear I experienced clouded my mind from recognizing myself as pregnant with my first child. I was so scared yet tried so many ways to stay strong and not succumb to my legal "right" to turn to abortion.

Sorrowfully, I let the world win—fear had taken a hold of me. When my child died that horrible day, my body survived, but my soul was crushed—I truly thought I sold my soul to the Devil.

Many like me, who have suffered from that unthinkable decision, turn to thoughts of suicide—which is where I found myself, or they drown themselves in promiscuity, drugs, alcohol, anything to keep the truth from surfacing. Because the truth is heinous! Abortion kills innocent people!

We of this state of Vermont, in all of it's natural beauty, can do so much better! There is a lot of money involved in the promotion of abortion which is due to greed and the advancement of unethical science. We need to do our part, individually and collectively, to help the new mom and the new citizen that is within her, her child.

A culture of death is never the answer!

True Love is; Hope is!!!

Delia Warnecke

Madame Chair and Members of the Human Services Committee, I wish to express my strong support for amending the state Constitution by adopting Proposal 5, the Right to Personal Reproductive Freedom.

As previous members of the public have expressed, I feel strongly that a decision to bring a pregnancy to term, as well as decisions regarding contraception or sterilization, are personal and private concerns. I want to be transparent in letting you know that in my 20's I became pregnant and was able to have an abortion. It was a difficult decision that has haunted me for years afterward. However, the reality was that the father was completely opposed to having the child and I did not have the mental stability at that time to parent a child alone. Hard as it was, I believe I made the right decision for the unborn child rather than passing on my own trauma to the child and potentially bringing her/him up with the financial stress creating more mental stress. It's not a decision that I take lightly but it is one that I want every woman and man to have access to.

States around the country have made it difficult or almost impossible for women to have abortions when they have made the difficult, personal decision to do so. I see that it often impacts lower income women and women who are often already marginalized in one way or another. Vermont has had 50 years of reproductive freedom to date. I feel that now Vermont would be taking a stand against discrimination on the basis of race, gender and class to allow people their personal reproductive freedom.

I urge you not to allow opponents to obfuscate the issue with claims of unclear or vague language, but rather to vote the bill out of committee as written.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony, Josephine Corcoran, LCMHC

support the proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution regarding the right to personal reproductive liberty.

Giovanni Costantini

Essex, VT

(registered voter)

Thank you

Dear Committee on Human Services:

In your deliberations, please consider the fact that, according to most medical research, a pre-born baby feels pain at about 24 weeks. Therefore, any abortion in the third trimester is inflicting pain.

Terminating a pregnancy after viability is even worse; it is infanticide.

How can we live with ourselves if we allow unrestricted abortions up to and including the moment of birth? I will be ashamed to call myself a Vermonter if this comes to pass.

Sincerely,

Anne Audette, Williston

We write in opposition to Proposal 5, which would amend the constitution in an attempt to grant Vermonters total autonomy in making reproductive decisions, the most consequential of which is abortion. Complete autonomy ignores the rights of others. No law can guarantee it, and in fact it does not exist among social beings. I do not have the right to choose whether to run a red light, because doing so threatens others. The right to unfettered abortion threatens health care workers who become mere machines, fathers and other family members who are given no say at all and may find out after the fact that their relative has been killed, a woman who is never not subject to pressure, and most of all a child, who is dead forever so that his mother, who has the alternative of adoption, will not have the inconvenience of being pregnant for nine months. Granting one person the "freedom" (as if such a thing existed) to choose death for another, in exchange for nine months of inconvenience is simply and outrageously unacceptable. Calling killing a right is uncivilized.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn and Gerald McMurray  
Arlington, VT 05250

The wording of this proposal does not seem particularly clear but the intent is. I strongly urge that this not be passed. Vermont already protects abortion, we need to start protecting the rights of the unborn. This proposal takes "abortion" to many levels too far!

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7 KJV)  
Laurie

When I was a young woman with an unplanned pregnancy and ill prepared financially or more importantly emotionally to have a child, abortion was illegal. Fortunately through a program at a local health care center in New York City requiring an OBY-GYN examination and a consult referral with a therapist in another borough, I was able to schedule an appointment in Pennsylvania at a physician's office. I had supportive friends who helped me emotionally and financially. It was traumatizing and it greatly impacted my emotional state for many years. The clandestine nature of the process at the time added to the emotional burden. An abortion is not an easy decision for any woman, but it must be a woman's right to make that decision.

I urge Vermont to make the right choice and approve the amendment to the Constitution.

Thank you,  
Maria Horn

I strongly urge you to NOT pass Proposition 5. Because this amendment is vague and deceptive, it will only cause trouble in the future if passed.

Please do not mess with the Vermont constitution!

Kate Wall Lyndonville, VT 05851

Commented [JT1]:

It seems that the language of such a proposal to the Vt. constitution is way out of line for 75% or more of the citizens in VT. It is so general (I am not so sure that is correct) that the lawyers and the Vermont supreme court will be busy for the next 20 + years getting anything cleared up.

Also, the laws of Vermont already explain the choices people can use for themselves. There is no need to muddy the water with redundancy.

Serious education is needed, explaining why or why not a procedure may be used for a particular individual. Eliminate assumptions with education to be required for the so called patients.

Respectively submitted;

Michael H Thompson  
Milton, VT.05468

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To Whom It May Concern,

Protect the right for all Vermonters to make their own reproductive decisions in the Vermont constitution!

We should all have the freedom to plan our futures, and choose for ourselves whether and when to have children.

Reproductive health care decisions should be made between a patient and their health care provider, not politicians.

Each of us should be able to make our own decisions in life - no matter who we are, where we live, or the amount of money we have.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachel Lamagna  
Plainfield, VT

Hi, my name is Carolyn Moore and I am from South Burlington. I am here today to ask that you vote in favor of the Reproductive Liberty Amendment. My husband and I found out, at 12 weeks gestation, that our first pregnancy was not compatible with life. Its brain was protruding through a massive hole in the back of its skull; its kidneys were riddled with cysts. We made the difficult decision to

terminate the pregnancy and do further testing. We found out that we were carriers of a genetic mutation that results in a condition called Meckel Gruber Syndrome – a rare and fatal condition, not able to be diagnosed until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester – and that there was a 25% chance that each subsequent pregnancy would have Meckel Gruber. Out of my 6 pregnancies, I wound up having 3 beautiful, healthy children, but also sadly had 3 pregnancies with Meckel Gruber Syndrome. With the support and guidance of my genetic counselor and OB team, I terminated those 3 pregnancies.

Each decision to terminate was incredibly difficult and heartbreaking. Those were pregnancies that we wanted. We shared our Meckel Gruber diagnosis and the decisions to terminate those pregnancies with only a select few family members and close friends. We grieved in silence, afraid that others would judge our decisions. Afraid that instead of compassion, we would be faced with scorn and disgust. I am here today because I am not ashamed. It was a medical decision, plain and simple. Shame and judgment have no place in medical decisions, and neither do politicians. It should be left up to the individual and their medical provider. Everyone deserves the right to make their own medical decisions.

Please, pass the Reproductive Liberty Amendment and protect Vermonters reproductive rights. Thank you for your time.

Carolyn Moore, South Burlington