

I am **opposed** to attempting to modify our Vermont Constitution to override the United States Declaration of Independence where all citizens have the inalienable right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Abortion at any time & for any reason deprives citizens of LIFE.

Our nation was founded on Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness! And NOT this crazy culture of Death proposed by many of our Vermont Legislators.

What kind of craziness are Vermont Legislators proposing when our elected legislators wish to kill our unborn babies & encourage mothers & fathers to kill their own unborn babies who have the right to Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness as guaranteed by our Declaration of Independence?

Our Vermont Legislators are opposing the United States Declaration of Independence and are attempting to do something that is inherently unconstitutional.

How very, very sad it is when elected Vermont Legislators even begin to think about disposing of our babies like they are something to go out with the trash and not something to be treasured! Our Vermont Legislators need to obtain some very basic morality training. Plain old Common Sense says that Legislators should encourage Mothers & Fathers to treasure the precious gift of Life that is being given to them.

When you also consider financial gains to the State of Vermont for future tax earnings & growth of the Vermont economy this makes no sense at all. Instead, Legislators want to provide financial incentives to encourage workers to move to the State of Vermont when we have worker shortages because our current tax base is deficient.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Biegen

Vergennes, Vermont 05491

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Prop 5 is framing abortion as PRO-CHOICE...the exercise of REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOMS/RIGHTS. How do your neighbors come to be accused of interfering with the freedom to choose...the freedom to reproduce? These freedoms have never been at issue. We are asked to agree, that once the freedom to reproduce has been exercised, the elimination of the product of that reproductive freedom, is to be enshrined. It's asking the community to endorse a "right" to a reproductive mulligan...a do-over. Those in the community, who wish to prevail on you not to eliminate your reproductive mistakes, do not intend to have you relinquish your control over your own bodies. This is a specious accusation --- the same as accusing abolitionists of looking to strip planters of their property rights. The abolitionists wanted citizens to change their minds about slaves being people, not property...worthy of the protections recognized for all people. Now we object to this Prop 5 and ask you to change your minds. Reproductive results are people. Don't lives, once started, also deserve the protections accorded the rest of us? --

V. Curtis Hunter Ph.D NCSP  
School Psychologist; Ret.

Dear committee, As a a long time resident of West Rupert ,Vermont and father of a daughter about to head to UVM, I enthusiastically support proposition 5. We, as a state leading the country in social issues , must amend our constitution to provide certainty for reproductive rights . This hopefully will encourage other states to take similar measures .

James Cole

The way I read it, Proposal 5 has faulty language and wording that is not concise. The developing fetus/baby/child/individual has no rights. It will be denied or infringed upon because it will not be allowed to live. Nowhere does Proposal 5 use the word "abortion". That's what this is all about, right? Why beat around the bush. Call it what it is. And why? Vermont already has Act 47 which guarantees the right to an abortion. Why is this necessary? It is overkill. Kill Proposition 5, not babies.

Kay Ellis,  
St.Johnsbury VT 05819

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I would like to voice my concern with Proposal 5, regarding personal reproductive autonomy. Among other things, this proposal seeks to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right for the state of Vermont. As a Christian who believes in the authority of the Bible, I am convinced that this proposal goes against the command of God not to murder human beings, those creatures created in the image of God. I recognize that not all Vermonters hold my same view, and yet a significant number do believe as I do, that to abort an unborn child is an act of murder. Therefore, I must communicate that I believe this proposal opposes God and His Word. To claim to promote the rights of citizens and women while denying the rights of and killing the unborn is a hollow and empty undertaking.

My concerns, however, do not stop with merely the act of abortion. If Proposal 5 passes, it will have a profound impact on other Christians who share my convictions. If "personal reproductive autonomy" is granted as a constitutional right, what will happen to pastors, clergy, or even individuals who speak against abortion, prostitution, or transgenderism, issues which Proposal 5 will also affect? Will they be fined or imprisoned for remaining true to and communicating their religious convictions, two other rights granted to us as American citizens? Will Christians be forced to leave Vermont in order to safely practice and hold to precious sentiments of faith because they cannot safely or legally hold to their convictions in light of the state's constitution? These are important issues that all Vermonters must consider. This is not merely a case of Pro-life vs. Pro-abortion, but of religious freedom in a country that was founded on such principles.

I ask you to please not pass Proposal 5. Please reject this proposal in order to preserve the lives of the unborn, as well as to preserve the freedom of religion and freedom of speech for the born.

Luke Waite  
Manchester Center, VT

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I am writing to testify in favor of an amendment to the Vermont constitution to guarantee abortion rights for Vermont citizens in the future, even if political winds change in the

state in a way that would threaten abortion rights if such an amendment were not in place.

Back in the summer of 1977 I found myself facing an unplanned pregnancy in the middle of rural West Virginia. We were trying to use the sympto-thermal method of birth control but we'd misunderstood the instructions and done things exactly backwards. People use that method when they are trying TO get pregnant also. It works quite well!

I was living in a canvas yurt in a remote holler a 3/4-mile walk from the main road. My husband and I made our living picking apples and pruning orchards in fall and winter and homesteading the rest of the year. We hauled our water from a stream, cut our firewood by hand, and cooked over an open fire. We tended a large garden and milked goats. In short, it was a very physical existence.

When I got my positive pregnancy test result I happened to be at the nearby regional hospital in Cowen, West Virginia, because my husband had just suffered a ruptured appendix and was a patient there at the hospital. I have never seen anyone so sick in my life. His surgery took more than 3 hours and he was still fitted with drains for a week afterward to ward off any further sepsis. Even when he got out of the hospital a week later, he was under strict orders not to lift anything heavier than 8 pounds for the next couple of months. A gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds. We weren't sure he'd be up to picking apples that coming fall.

I knew that I wanted to have children and it was an agonizing decision for me to decide to terminate that pregnancy. I waited until the last possible date for obtaining an outpatient abortion at a clinic. But finally I decided I had to do it. It was just a TERRIBLE time for us to try to bring a baby into our lives when our very livelihood was falling apart.

Abortion wasn't legally available in West Virginia then, so I had to fly to New York City for the procedure. We had no phone, so I had to make all the arrangements from the pay phone in the local mom-and-pop grocery store. And we couldn't afford two plane tickets, so I had to go alone. Luckily I had a friend who I could stay with in New York. And my friend was able to lend me the money for the \$200 fee and go with me to the clinic as well. If I didn't have that friend I would have been out of luck, which is exactly the position many women face today in states where abortion rights have been severely restricted. We need to keep abortion SAFE AND LEGAL in Vermont.

The decision about when and where to have a child is a personal decision. Children deserve to be brought into a world where they can be welcomed and cared for by their parents. After life stabilized for us we had two healthy, happy babies who have grown up to be happy and productive adults.

Sincerely,  
Laura Schlivek  
Montpelier, VT

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As a seventy-year-old Vermonter, I am here in opposition to proposal 5, there is " **no** " need to add this barbaric procedure to our Constitution, foolishness or carelessness on one's behalf is a personal choice, and there is no place in our Constitution for their actions, common sense is all that's needed.

In this day and age if a woman cannot control getting pregnant with all the know contraceptives available today that's pretty pathetic, if a woman wants to kill her unborn child, that's her business and should not stain our Constitution !!

So I oppose Proposal 5, and this committee should also.

Thank You  
Charles

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Dear House Human Services Committee,

As a former health care professional, I am writing to express my strong support for **Reproductive Liberty Amendment (Prop 5)**. Reproductive liberty is not only an issue of individual freedom or human rights but is a life-or-death issue for millions. My work in women's health has spanned decades and more than 2 dozen countries and I have seen first-hand the devastation of people's lives by their inability to control their own fertility, from too many children to feed and educate to maternal death from unsafe abortion.

I am proud to live in a state that has the humanity and foresight to enshrine this most basic human right into our state constitution. We can hope that Vermont will be a model for other states and our country to ensure that we never go backward again with laws that harm us all.

Thank you for your consideration,

August Burns, PA, MPH  
Middlesex

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JuJ

Just think of Jimmy Stewart in "It's A Wonderful Life"! How one person's life impact can make the difference in so many lives! That is why we have birthday parties to Celebrate their life!

How can we consider our own personal autonomy to be more important than that of our own future heritage?

Please consider this as you are voting on a constitutional amendment that will affect the futures of many!

Thank you for your consideration, Jenny Reith

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Testimony in Support of Prop 5

**I strongly believe an individual's right to personal reproductive autonomy is central to the liberty and dignity to determine one's own life course.**

Each of us should be entitled to make decisions about our health—free from judgment or assumptions. No political or moral entity should have the power to dictate if and when someone

becomes a parent, what kind of birth control they decide to use, or whether someone decides to seek abortion care.

While I do not have a personal story to share, I do have decades of personal knowledge about students, adults, single parents, and couples with children, and I've had the benefit of volunteering for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England. I have listened to stories from people who are in school and unintentionally become pregnant; single mothers who are struggling to support small children and know they do not have the emotional or economic means to support another child; women who were raped by a relative; as well as a cherished friend [unmarried] who became pregnant and choose to raise that child. Each of them, with their own sets of circumstances, deserves our respect to make their own decisions about their life course.

I believe it is vitally important to protect reproductive freedom in Vermont, because right now, approximately half of the United States is on the verge of banning—or severely restricting—abortion rights. With 49 years of Roe v Wade in jeopardy, the Reproductive Liberty Amendment will safeguard reproductive rights for all Vermonters.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit testimony and for the important work you do on the Human Services Committee. I urge you to pass the Reproductive Liberty Amendment.

Randall Perkins

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I am asking the House Committee on Human Services to hear my testimony regarding my son, Alex.

Alex's due date was June 28th, 1992. Due to my age, 32, and a prior C-Section, this pregnancy was considered high risk. I attended the regularly scheduled OBGYN meetings at UVM with my midwife, a UVM employee.

At a point in my pregnancy, in one of my regularly scheduled ultrasounds, my midwife, after doing her usual measurements and observations, left the room. She came back in with another professional, and they proceeded to tell me that the baby had unusually large head measurements and that they believed he might be a Down's Syndrome child. They wanted to do an amniocentesis which I denied due to the high risk of spontaneous miscarriage. I was counseled that if the baby was a Down's Syndrome child, I might want to consider an elective abortion. I felt pressure and alone.

I finally decided that I would take whatever child Alex turned out to be (whether a male or female, the child's name was the same, Alex). I talked to Alex, read aloud to Alex, and sang to Alex. When he was born on his due date by induced labor (due to the high risk), Alex was a beautiful baby boy with a full head. He was NOT affected with Down's Syndrome. Today, Alex is 29, a graduate from Johnson State College, and employed full time. Guess what? He still has a big head, and it fits his full-sized body quite well. He's a handsome, happy, young adult.

I am glad I had time to think about the information I received during that visit, and I am also glad I listened to my heart and not the medical professional's advice. Somewhere in his childhood, Alex adopted a nickname for himself: "Special Child." His brothers and sister were often jealous

of that self-appointed title, but Alex lays claim to it fiercely, and he's absolutely RIGHT... he is a special child and I'm glad he wasn't whisked away by some professional's faulty ideas and advice.

Every life is precious.

Thank you,  
Suzanne Pelletier  
Montgomery  
Manchester Center

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I am an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, and I support the Reproductive Liberty Amendment (Prop 5), a proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution that would protect every Vermonter's right to make their own reproductive decisions.

Within the past month, I have heard from friends and loved ones living in Vermont and elsewhere who have experienced the broad array of joys and sorrows that go along with reproductive choices and realities. For one same sex couple, it's the good news of a long-awaited baby born with the support of fertility treatments. For a friend, it's the sadness of miscarrying early in her pregnancy and navigating her health care options in the aftermath of that loss. For another couple, it's the difficult decision to abort a fetus after prenatal testing revealed an adverse health prognosis.

Each day people in all corners of our state face questions and decisions like these about their reproductive health. My faith affirms that bodily autonomy is foundational to human dignity and self-determination. I believe that every person has a right to have or not have children, to raise one's children in safe and healthy environments, and to be free from oppression or shame in living out one's sexuality. Every person ought to be able to make decisions about their bodies and access health care according to their beliefs and values.

When my son was 5 years old, my spouse and I got pregnant a second time. After eight weeks, the embryo stopped growing and I did not carry that pregnancy through its full development. Instead, I was able to use my own sacred conscience, the consultation of my doctor and spouse, and the stirrings of my own heart to make the painful decision to have that miscarried pregnancy removed from my body. How grateful I am that I had that choice as heart-breaking as it was to make.

No matter your age, gender, religion, race, sexuality, or how much money you have in your bank account, we all have the right to make important decisions about our lives, our futures, and our bodies. With these very rights under attack in every corner of the country, the Reproductive Liberty Amendment is critically important to upholding our freedom and dignity.

Rev. Joan Javier-Duval  
Unitarian Universalist Minister Montpelier, VT

## Proposal 5 Public Comment

I am the Reverend Johanna Nichols, Minister Emerita of the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universality Society, Middlebury, Vermont. I am a resident of Montpelier.

I support the Reproductive Liberty Amendment because codifying reproductive liberty in the Constitution protects the integrity of one's body and one's reproductive health care decisions from the impacts of politics. Laws can be changed, as we are witnessing with other states, and the U.S. Supreme Court may erode federal constitutional protections for reproductive rights this term. I believe that we must protect reproductive liberty in Vermont.

In 1970, I was 23 years old, married and using birth control, and women in Vermont knew that we had to travel to New York state or beyond to terminate an unintended pregnancy. A 1972 decision of the Vermont Supreme Court invalidated a state statute criminalizing abortion. Under this statute, doctors who provided abortions could be sentenced to up to 10 years in jail. In 1973, the right to terminate a pregnancy became legal by the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Though it was unconstitutional, that old Vermont statute remained until a measure to repeal it was unanimously approved by the legislature in 2014. It was a shadow over the reproductive liberty of the people of Vermont and the health care system.

In my adult reproductive years, I was assured the freedom to plan my future and choose for myself whether and when to have children. Fortunately, I always had access to birth control and never needed to terminate an unwanted pregnancy through failure of birth control or unprotected sex. Without this amendment to the Constitution, I do not trust that the people of Vermont can absolutely count on the continued legality of and access to birth control and abortion.

Since 1972, as a teacher and a minister, committed to healthy reproductive decisions, I have supported sexuality education for adolescents and young adults in schools and faith communities. I know how difficult the decision can be at any age to terminate a pregnancy or to carry it to term, not only in my professional capacity but also in my own family. I firmly believe that this decision belongs in our own hands. We can trust Vermonters, with the guidance and support of their families and health care community, to make their own decisions based on the circumstances of their own lives and futures. Therefore, I ask you to pass the Reproductive Liberty Amendment. Thank you for your time.

Johanna Nichols, 25 Hubbard Street, Apt 2, Montpelier, VT 05602  
802 349-9436  
Registered Voter  
nichols.johanna@gmail.com

There is no success without successors here in VT.

As you consider this constitutional amendment, please think of your vote on behalf of, or negating the success of(our future and generations)!

Please read the headline below and then click on the link for the full story!

<https://trk.cp20.com/click/e0fg-2hhvbq-scoy2r-7fubbmj2/>

#VoteNOonVTProp5

Thank you for your consideration,  
Glenn Taylor

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