

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-30

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO
RECOGNIZE A RIGHT OF PERSONAL REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY AND

Title: FREEDOM.

Vote Date: 3/29/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/25/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Election Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this resolution is to establish a state constitutional right via amendment to guarantee personal reproductive autonomy, except in such cases where a compelling state interest is present. This would ensure that residents of the state would not have their personal bodily freedom infringed by future laws.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU – CT, offered testimony in support of this resolution, stating that access to abortion is a question of dignity and humanity, as well as legality. She stated that protecting the right to abortion access is an issue of disproportionate importance to low-income and minority individuals, and that the state of Connecticut must act to dismantle barriers to abortion.

Madeline Granato, Policy Director, CT Women's Educational and Legal Fund, testified in support of this resolution, stating that the potential for the Supreme Court to overturn Roe vs. Wade makes this a priority. She stated that Connecticut has been a leader in reproductive freedom for over 30 years, and that it is important to guarantee access to abortion, not just the right to one. Finally, she stated that access to abortion is crucial to giving women the opportunity to control their own education and career paths.

Dr. Shannon Lane, Deputy Registrar of Voters, Town of Bethany, offered testimony in support of this resolution, stating that she supports any measure at the state level to provide support for reproductive health services. She stated that her experience with social workers has shown her the impact on affected communities that changes in reproductive rights can have.

Gretchen Raffa, Vice President of Public Policy, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, offered testimony in support of this resolution, stating that with the Supreme Court's upcoming decision on Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health, abortion access has been increasingly limited by many states, despite the precedent of Roe v. Wade. She stated that access to abortion falls within the scope of normal healthcare procedure and is both safe and necessary. She also stated that legal protections of the right to an abortion is not enough, and that access to the procedure is necessary for many individuals in economically dire situations.

Liz Gustafson, State Director, Pro-Choice Connecticut, testified in support of this resolution, stating that access to abortion is an issue of dignity and humanity. She stated that the majority of Americans support safe and legal abortion, and that as states throughout the country restrict abortion access, she hopes Connecticut will remain a leader in protecting access to abortions for those in need.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anne Manusky, President, Connecticut Republican Assembly, offered testimony in opposition to this resolution, stating that it represents government overreach, and would solidify abortions as a right. She stated that the Founding Fathers did not establish a right to an abortion.

Bill O'Brien, Vice President, Connecticut Right to Life Corporation, testified in opposition to this resolution, stating that Connecticut is not a historically pro-life state, and that abortion is not a form of healthcare. He stated that abortion has declined in Connecticut throughout the last decades, and that the procedure violates the Hippocratic Oath.

Cecily Routman, Executive Director and President, Jewish Pro-Life Foundation, offered testimony in opposition to this resolution, stating that Judaism inherently prohibits abortion, and that the practice supports a major industry, and disproportionately targets unborn babies from minority backgrounds. She further stated that abortion was historically used as a weapon against Jews by the Nazi party and poses a dangerous threat to Jews.

Suzy Smith, Pro-Life Council of Connecticut, testified in opposition to this resolution, stating that there is no federal constitutional right to an abortion, and that this resolution would allow for unlimited abortion access up to birth. She stated that this could be used to discriminate on the basis of race or disability and would remove parental notification requirements for minors seeking an abortion.

Deacon David Reynolds, Associate Director of Public Policy, CT Catholic Public Affairs Conference, offered testimony in opposition to this resolution, stating that the resolution was an attempt to dictate morality through force of law. He further stated that this resolution

would codify abortion without limitations, including partial-birth abortion. Finally, he stated that this bill threatens religious freedom of institutions that do not recognize abortion as a right.

The Committee received written testimony from constituents opposed to the resolution on the grounds that abortion has no place in the Connecticut state constitution and is ungodly and immoral. Many also stated that abortion should not be a constitutional right, and that the procedure is tantamount to murder and inflicts emotional trauma. Others argued that this resolution would guarantee access to abortion up to the moment of birth and support the abortion industry. This testimony was provided by:

Keyla Acevedo	Jeanine Marcin
Donna Annecharico	Paul McVay
Karen Banks	Carolyn Meyer
Francis Barillaro	Mark Mnich
Marcel Becotte	Anna Montalvo
Margaret Becotte	Idalis Moreno
Don Belding	Suzanne Murphy
Carolyn Bennett	Christopher O'Brien
Julianna Bennett	Omayra Ortiz
Lydia Bennett	David Paton
Sandra Bondhus	Doreen Petrozza
Terryn Boucher	Elissa Ramage
Robin Brown	Jose Rivera
Anne Burns	Peter Rubsam
Evertt Carroll	Michael Saxton
Jenny Castro	Rose Saxton
Maureen Ciardiello	Sally Shelton
Sandra Cloutier	Joan Spoerndle
Zachary Corey	Klaus Stankiewicz
Karen Currier	Damaris Velez
Rocco DiGenova	Charles Vermilyea
Caitlin Dolan	Roger Viksnes
Lawrence Fuddany	Kathleen Vinci
Rev. Shirley Ellis	David Watrous
Nancy Flanders	Michael Wells
Cheryl Fusco	Teresa Wells
Rosellyn Giampietro	Leslie Wolfgang
David Godbout	
Donna Graham	
Ruth Gray	
Robert Hale Jr.	
Kathryn King	
Peter Knaus	
Linda Kosko	
Michael Kosko	
C Marcella Kuroski	
Stephen Lyon	
Patrick Maloney	

Reported by: Cameron Clarke

Date: 3/29/2022