



Testimony before the House Privileges and Elections Committee

November 13, 2024

Regarding HJ1 - Constitutional Amendment for Fundamental Right to Reproductive Freedom

I am Debby Churchman, a member of the League of Women Voters of Virginia, speaking in favor of HJ 1. The League believes that every Virginia resident should have access to affordable, quality health care, including abortion, birth control and the privacy to make reproductive choices. And Virginians agree, as borne out by the results of the 2023 and 2024 elections! According to a 2023 public poll conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute, 71% of Virginians asked said abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

The League believes abortion should be legal and safe, and that the decision should be left to those who are pregnant, with guidance from medical professionals who are free from the constraints of arbitrary bans. Such bans, as we have seen recently in Texas, strangle a doctor's ability to give timely medical support to women experiencing a miscarriage, resulting in women bleeding out in the parking lot and even dying.

And let's be clear about who is the most impacted by these life-threatening bans—vulnerable communities, especially women of color. We know who is being hurt, and who is doing the hurting. We ask that you do your part, not to cause the hurt but to stop it.

A planned pregnancy is a joyful occasion, the first step to nurturing and nourishing the next generation. But an unplanned pregnancy can derail a life, not only of the pregnant person, but also of her spouse and young children--possibly resulting in years of struggle and dependence on government services. Supporting the next generation includes supporting reproductive choice.

Virginians overwhelmingly support such choice. We ask that you give them a chance to prove it by voting for this constitutional amendment.

Thank you for listening.