



Reproductive Freedom Act

SB 1637; HB 2369

SUPPORT

Background: In our current political environment, access to reproductive healthcare is continually under attack. Proposed federal regulations have taken direct aim at birth control and abortion. Moreover, the existing make-up of the U.S. Supreme Court places *Roe v. Wade* in real danger of being overturned or significantly rolled back. As of today, if *Roe* were to be overturned, there is nothing in Virginia's state laws that protects the right to abortion. Given these threats, it is critical for Virginia to ensure that its residents maintain their fundamental reproductive healthcare rights, including: the right to choose or refuse contraception or sterilization, carry a pregnancy to term, or have an abortion.

Talking Points:

It's critical that Virginians have the freedom and dignity to make their own personal and private healthcare decisions, including the fundamental right to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, or have an abortion. We strongly believe that a person is fully capable of making thoughtful and deeply personal decisions about their family, future, and health without the interference from politicians who presume to know better.

Like access to contraception, access to abortion is a core component of social and economic equality. Studies show that impeding access can produce devastating economic consequences.

- Women who live in states with policies that support access to reproductive health care have higher earnings and are more integrated into the workforce, and face less occupational segregation compared with women living in states that have more limited reproductive health care access.

Whether a person is choosing contraception, abortion, or carrying a pregnancy to term, their choice should be free from governmental interference, discrimination, and unnecessary barriers, including economic barriers.

- Women who seek abortions are often low-income and already have children. Nearly two-thirds of women seeking an abortion- already have at least one child. If abortion wasn't protected in Virginia it would disproportionately impact low-income women. Politicians shouldn't be allowed to deny someone the ability to make their own personal healthcare decisions because they are struggling to make ends meet, creating further economic setbacks.

Keeping abortion safe and legal drastically reduces the odds of medical risk or death.

- Before *Roe v. Wade*, illegal abortions were estimated to range from 200,000 to 1.2 million per year and constituted at least 17 percent of all deaths attributed to pregnancy and childbirth in 1965 alone. The legalization of abortion in the U.S. led to safer practices and drastically reduced the incidence of maternal deaths and hospitalizations related to abortion.