

Legislation Text

File #: 220387, Version: 0

Authorizing the Committees on Children and Youth and Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings concerning the imminent threat to the longstanding constitutional right to an abortion, to examine the profound and devastating local impact that the potential repeal of *Roe vs. Wade* would have on individual lives and society as a whole, and to explore what Philadelphia can do to ensure and increase access to abortion in the face of this threat.

WHEREAS, Abortions are an integral part of healthcare; and

WHEREAS, The right to an abortion in the United States was recognized nearly fifty years ago in the 1973 ruling, *Roe v. Wade*, which declared a fundamental constitutional right to privacy that included the right to terminate a pregnancy prior to viability; and

WHEREAS, Although the right to an abortion holds majority support in opinion polls, a continuous movement has succeeded in drastically restricting that right in dozens of states throughout the country, even denying exceptions based on rape and incest or the immediate health of the parent, and has used the courts to seek repeal of any right to an abortion; and

WHEREAS, As a result of those efforts, abortion availability has been drastically reduced in a number of states, including the state of Texas where courts recently allowed implementation of a law that would ban almost all abortions and which encourages vigilante-style private enforcement; and

WHEREAS, This week, a leaked draft copy of a United States Supreme Court opinion in the case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* revealed that a majority of the court plans to not only repeal *Roe v. Wade* but also intends to restrict additional civil rights including access to contraception, same sex marriage, and LGBT rights; and

WHEREAS, A repeal of *Roe v. Wade* would likely result in the immediate banning of legal abortion in thirteen states which currently have in place so-called "trigger bans" in the event of Supreme Court action. A total of twenty-six states have laws demonstrating intent to ban legal abortions. A minority of states have enacted laws to protect access to abortions; and

WHEREAS, Despite the existence of *Roe v. Wade* up to this point, legal abortion is nonetheless inaccessible to far too many people who need it, inequities that are magnified by race and class. Measures like the Hyde Amendment, which bans coverage of abortion for people insured by Medicaid, have placed reproductive healthcare out of reach for people who are low-income and particularly harm people of color; and

WHEREAS, A repeal of *Roe v. Wade* will not end abortion, but will deny many people safe abortions, and will radically increase healthcare inequities and disparate criminalization; and

WHEREAS, Local abortion providers predict a dramatic increase in those travelling to seek abortions from states which ban them, potentially impacting access to healthcare more broadly; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has long been a battleground in the effort to enact restrictions on abortion and reproductive healthcare, giving rise to the case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* that previously threatened to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The Pennsylvania legislature is currently considering multiple bills restricting abortions, including an amendment to the state constitution that would strengthen efforts to ban or severely limit abortions; and

WHEREAS, The end of a federal right to an abortion means cities and states that support bodily autonomy and human dignity must assess the likely impacts and how they will need to respond, including what proactive steps they can take to safeguard civil rights and advance the critical work of reproductive justice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Committees on Children and Youth and Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings concerning the imminent threat to the longstanding constitutional right to an abortion, to examine the profound and devastating local impact that the potential repeal of *Roe vs. Wade* would have on individual lives and society as a whole and explore what Philadelphia can do to ensure and increase access to abortion in the face of this threat.