



July 6, 2022

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka
President of the Senate
Massachusetts Senate
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Bruce E. Tarr
Minority Leader
Massachusetts Senate
Boston, MA 02133

Dear President Spilka and Minority Leader Tarr,

On behalf of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) and our more than 120 members practicing in Massachusetts, we write to express our strong support for H. 4930. At a time when states across the nation are banning abortion care and criminalizing clinicians that perform the procedure, we applaud Massachusetts for taking swift and bold action to expand access to safe, necessary, and sometimes lifesaving care.

SMFM, founded in 1977, is the medical professional society for maternal-fetal medicine subspecialists, who are obstetricians with additional training in high-risk pregnancies. SMFM represents more than 5,500 members who care for high-risk pregnant people and provides education, promotes research, and engages in advocacy to advance optimal and equitable perinatal outcomes for all people who desire and experience pregnancy.

As physicians who provide care to individuals experiencing high-risk pregnancies, we are particularly concerned about protecting access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services, including abortion care. Individuals with high-risk pregnancies are more likely to experience medical complications – for themselves, their fetus(es), or both – that can lead to increased maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality. In some instances, an abortion may be required to protect the life or health of an individual. In other instances, the pregnant person and involved family members might choose an abortion because the fetus is diagnosed with a fatal or potentially life-limiting condition. Abortion is an essential treatment option for patients experiencing a high-risk pregnancy.

SMFM appreciates the steps the Massachusetts Senate took in late 2020 to protect access to abortion services by codifying the ROE Act. We encourage you to build upon that work by advancing the expanded protections included in H. 4930. In particular, SMFM applauds the bill's protections for clinicians. As more states around the country enact abortion bans, patients that need abortion care, especially those experiencing high-risk pregnancy, will travel to states like Massachusetts that have enacted evidence-based policies governing patient care. H. 4930 will protect clinicians providing that evidence-based care from baseless legal action from actors in other states.

SMFM also appreciates that H. 4930 would permit later abortions when the fetus is diagnosed with a severe fetal condition. The provision would ensure treatment decisions in these difficult cases are driven by the values and desires of patients and involved family members, not artificial timelines imposed by elected officials. SMFM encourages the Senate to retain this language at the bill moves through the upper chamber.

Abortion care is health care, and all individuals must be able to access the full spectrum of reproductive health services. It is critical to safeguard and lift restrictions that limit access to abortion services, especially with ongoing legislative and legal attacks on abortion rights across the country. SMFM is committed to protecting access to abortion services and ensuring that individuals are receiving high-quality, equitable reproductive health care, including abortion.

SMFM thanks you for your ongoing commitment to preserving the health of our nation's mother and infants, and your commitment to protecting access to reproductive health care services. We urge you to quickly enact the H. 4930 to further enhance Massachusetts' protections for abortion care. Please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Abbott, SMFM's Senior Director of Advocacy, at rabbott@smfm.org or 405.642.9391 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



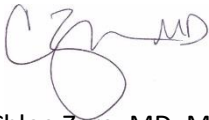
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