



October 5, 2022

District of Columbia Committee on Health  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue  
DC, 20004

Re: B24-830, the “Protecting Health Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Amendment Act of 2022”

Dear Members of the Committee:

As a doctor and abortion provider in the District, I know firsthand how critical it is for DC residents to have access to reproductive health care services. As the President and CEO of Physicians for Reproductive Health (PRH), a national organization working to improve access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion care, our network of physicians, of all specialties from across the country, including physicians of multiple specialties in the District of Columbia, remain committed to meeting the health care needs of the patients for whom they provide care. We urge you to pass B24-830 to protect providers who provide abortion and reproductive health care to patients from facing disciplinary actions from boards as defined in DC codes § 3–1201.01.

The Supreme Court’s recent ruling to overturn and eliminate the constitutional right to abortion for millions of people in this country demands bold and proactive solutions. With twenty-six states likely to ban abortion, the District must do everything it can to protect abortion providers and ensure they are able to freely provide comprehensive reproductive health care to their patients. B24-830 offers this protection by preventing DC medical boards from punishing a clinician for providing abortion and reproductive health care services to patients who live in states where the care is legally restricted. Health care providers in DC should not have to inquire where patients live or turn away patients who have traveled to DC for care from hostile states for fear of disciplinary actions for providing high-quality, safe, essential health care.

Although access to abortion and other reproductive health care remains legal in the District of Columbia, the everchanging legal landscape has providers fearful of facing criminal and civil penalties. We are witnessing states with abortion bans attempt to ban residents from traveling out-of-state to receive care and criminalize the out-of-state providers who provide this care. In response to these once hypotheticals but now very real threats, patients need champions of reproductive freedom to do everything within our power to protect access to this necessary care. This includes creating protections for providers to allow them to safely practice without fear of harassment or retaliation. Preventing medical boards from taking disciplinary actions against providers ensures that providers will not risk the loss, denial, revocation or suspension of their license, registration, or certification for caring for their communities. Abortion is safe, normal, essential health care. Trained providers deserve to care for their patients without fear of retaliation.

Protecting providers licensure safeguards access to full spectrum reproductive health care for DC residents now and for future generations. As abortion bans are implemented across this country, we will

begin to see a direct impact on the availability of providers. A study from [USCF Bixby Center](#) found that 44.8% of OB-GYN residency programs are located in states that are certain or likely to ban abortion and 43.9% of residents in accredited OB-GYN programs in 2020 were at programs in states that are certain or likely to ban abortion. With diminished access to training, the workforce educated and trained in providing abortion care will dwindle. It is imperative that DC protect the licensure of abortion providers in their community. Likewise, providers from states with abortion bans who may have lost their licenses because of these unjust restrictions and are applying for licensure in DC should not fear denial because they once provided abortion care in a state where such care is now illegal.

It is critical these protections are not limited to the provision of abortion care. They must include protections for all types of reproductive health care. Abortion bans are merely the first tier of attacks. Only three months since the overturning of *Roe*, we are already witnessing attacks on contraception and emergency contraception from the anti-abortion movement driven by misinformation and disinformation. Moreover, we cannot ignore the attacks the LGBTQ+ community faces when attempting to access health care services. Attempts to ban gender-affirming care are moving forward in many of the same states that are banning abortion and attacking reproductive health care. As the Committee reviews B24-830 I urge you to ensure the protections for providers are inclusive of the full spectrum of reproductive health care, including gender-affirming care. We must do everything we can to explicitly protect access to health care for all people.

Abortion is a health issue, not an issue for the criminal legal system. The District of Columbia has a critical opportunity to protect providers and its residents' access to abortion care. I urge support of Bill 24-830 to protect providers from disciplinary actions for providing lawful abortion and reproductive health care services to patients from states where that care has been made illegal. If you have further question please reach out to Adrienne Ramcharan, Assistant Director of State Policy ([aramcharan@prh.org](mailto:aramcharan@prh.org)). Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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President and CEO  
Physicians for Reproductive Health