



NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon

Dear Rep. Carolyn Tomei and all the members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today to ask for your support of HCR 6. I have worked in women's health since 1970, 3 years before the Supreme Court decided on Roe v. Wade.

I was a problem pregnancy counselor in Massachusetts where abortions were not legal except in very limited circumstances. We counseled women on her options of continuing her pregnancy, adoption or accessing a safe, legal abortion. If she wanted to access an abortion procedure, it meant helping her get to another state. It was the only way for a woman to access safe and legal abortion care. A woman had to have enough resources to be able to get herself hundreds of miles away, and find accommodations where she could recover from the procedure safely. A woman was not legally allowed to make to make her own reproductive health care decisions - no matter what her circumstances where.

Out of desperation women who needed to end a pregnancy often turned to "back alley butchers" and incompetent hacks operating out of disgusting conditions. Those women suffered unsafe, medically incompetent abortions leaving far too many women dead, sterile or severely injured. A coat hanger was the only medical care that that some of these women got. What I am saying is not scare tactics or hyperbole I lived this and saw too many women die.

Before Roe an estimated 1.2 million women per year where forced to resort to illegal abortions and as many as 5,000 women died from those illegal abortions each year. In 1965 alone 17 percent of all deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth where caused by an illegal abortion. This tragedy is not just a thing of the past - right now across the world 13 percent of all maternal deaths worldwide are due to unsafe abortions.

The ability for women to make their own healthcare decisions and access contraception and safe legal abortion literally saves lives and has immeasurably improved the lives and health of millions upon millions of women. HCR 6 recognizes this fact and makes a resounding statement to the women of Oregon that their government fully and truly supports and protects their health, their privacy, and their liberty. On behalf of all the women who suffered and died and are suffering and dying because they can not access the contraception or abortion care they needed please support HCR 6.

Please ensure that Oregon women can make their own health care decisions in consultation with her physician and her faith. We do not know a woman's circumstances; no one else walks in her shoes. By supporting HCR6 you are supporting a women's ability to make important, personal decisions based on what is best for her circumstances and ensures that special interests cannot impose their beliefs and women- in- need will have access to safe medical care. Thank you for your consideration.