



State of Rhode Island

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE LIANA CASSAR, *District 66*

June 17, 2022

The Hon. K. Joseph Shekarchi
Speaker
Rm 323 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Speaker Shekarchi,

In light of the anticipated Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, which is expected to overturn the 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, it is imperative that state legislatures take every action possible to protect abortion access. It is unacceptable for the General Assembly to refuse to take action to protect reproductive rights and maintain a discriminatory policy at a time when the Supreme Court is expected to deny reproductive rights to many across the country.

There are abortion bans in Rhode Island and it is time to eliminate them. Our state effectively bans the 77,000 women of reproductive age covered by Medicaid and the 32,000 Rhode Islanders covered by the state employee health insurance plans from abortion access because the plans, by law, do not cover abortion.

Rhode Island's abortion bans codify discrimination into state-sponsored health insurance. The bans are poor health policy and poor economic policy. The bans inflict a medical and economic burden on patients and their health care providers. The bans compromise the health of patients and push many individuals further into poverty while denying them bodily autonomy.


The Equality in Abortion Coverage Act, currently held for further study in the House of Representatives Finance Committee, will eliminate Rhode Island's abortion bans. It is time to bring this legislation to a vote, correct this injustice and eliminate the bans.

The General Assembly did important work in passing the Reproductive Privacy Act in 2019, codifying protections assured by the *Roe v. Wade* decision. The intent of the Reproductive Privacy Act is not realized if all pregnant people do not have access to abortion care when they need it.

We, the undersigned, urge you to move the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act out of the House Finance Committee for a vote during this legislative session. This bill would make the right to abortion real for all who need it across the state. In passing this bill, Rhode Island would join 16 other states, including four other New England states, in assuring abortion access.

We strongly urge you to bring the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act to a vote to protect abortion access to ensure that all Rhode Islanders, particularly people of color and low-income individuals, have true and meaningful access to abortion care.

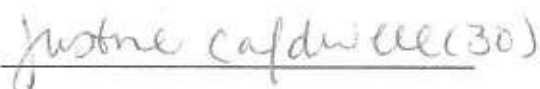
Sincerely,


Liana M. Cassar, MPH, MBA
RI State Representative
Riverside-Barrington District - 66



Edith H. Giffels (60)


Susan Donovan (67)


Kathleen A. Fogarty (35)


Justine Capdewelle (30)

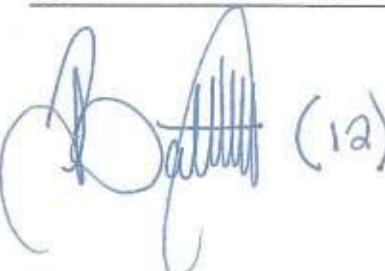

Jesse-Denise Cortez (72)


Keh Li (4)


Matt McE (71)


Mena Janzi (34)


A (61)


B (12)


Karen Abate (60)

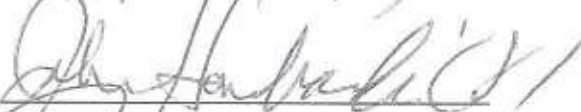

Joan (67)



B (7)


Brandon P (16)


J (56)


MASS (46)


J (1)


Robert C (32)


C (1)


Jose (68)