



663 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST
SUITE 200
SAINT PAUL, MN 55104

PHONE 651.789.2090

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Minnesota Senate Bldg. Room 2107
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 17th, 2023

Chair Wiklund:

Gender Justice is the organizational home of UnRestrict Minnesota, an expansive, diverse, and inclusive coalition for reproductive rights, health, and justice. UnRestrict Minnesota is a multi-racial coalition of health care clinics, abortion funds, practical support groups, LGBTQ advocacy groups, faith communities, organizers, lawyers, doulas, and many more.

Our coalition represents the majority of Minnesotans. Minnesotans have made their support for abortion rights abundantly clear — including by sending to the legislature our state's first pro-reproductive-freedom majority ever.

We are writing in support of SF70. SF70 would remove unconstitutional, outdated, unjust, and harmful statutes from our legislative code — bringing our laws back into line with the values and wishes of the vast majority of Minnesotans, restoring reproductive rights, and increasing reproductive health care access and equity throughout our state.

In 2019, Gender Justice filed a lawsuit challenging the byzantine scheme of abortion restrictions which anti-abortion lawmakers had littered throughout the Minnesota legislative code, contrary to the values of the majority of Minnesotans and sometimes through dubious, if not deceptive, means. These restrictions included:

- A script of medically inaccurate propaganda that doctors were required to read to patients seeking abortion care to deter them from going through with the procedure
- A provision requiring people seeking to end a pregnancy to book and attend a medically unnecessary additional appointment before they could receive abortion care
- A requirement that minors notify both of their parents of their decision to have an abortion even if they have no relationship or an abusive relationship with a parent
- A ban on advanced practice clinicians providing abortion care — against the recommendations of leading medical associations — and more.

Last July, Judge Thomas A. Gilligan rightly determined these restrictions were unconstitutional and permanently blocked their enforcement.

Lifting these restrictions had an immediate positive impact on providers, Minnesotans seeking abortion, and people from the upper midwest and across the country who have lost meaningful

access to reproductive health care in their home states. It was a proud moment for our state — an important step toward bringing our laws into line with the values that the majority of Minnesotans hold.

A majority of Minnesotans support other policies to ensure the right to abortion is made real through meaningful efforts to expand abortion access — including Medicaid funding for abortion and legal protections for providers and patients from out of state seeking abortion care in Minnesota.

And they are very much looking to you to lead. In our recent statewide survey, an overwhelming 89 percent of Minnesota voters said they want to know what their elected officials are doing on the issue of abortion and want you to take decisive action.

Passing SF 70 would take these and similarly unjust laws off our books for good. It is a necessary step to protect Minnesotans from potential future legislative and judicial action aimed at banning abortion and limiting the bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom of individuals.

Our history and our values have prepared Minnesota to step forward and be a beacon of compassion, care, and personal freedom for all Minnesotans and people seeking abortion care. We urge you to pass SF 70 and continue the vital work of making abortion care accessible to all Minnesotans, and to all who come to our state seeking abortion care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Peterson
Executive Director, Gender Justice