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Senator Melissa Wiklund  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2107  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 13th, 2023

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

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.

We are writing in support of SF165. SF165 is necessary to protect the rights and access to reproductive health care for all Minnesotans and those seeking care from outside the state.

The US Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v Wade* threw reproductive health care access into crisis and unleashed a flood of cruel and harmful laws attacking not only abortion rights, but also individual liberties and privacy more broadly.

Many of these laws seek not only to ban abortion in their own states, but also to reach across state lines, preventing people from traveling elsewhere to get the care they can't get at home — and punishing those who provide abortion care and help people get it.

The Reproductive Freedom Defense Act would

- Create strong protections for Minnesota's own health care providers and citizens against legal attacks and criminal penalties imposed by anti-abortion extremists in other states.
- Prevent our courts and institutions from being hijacked and weaponized in service of the anti-abortion agenda of people outside Minnesota.
- Establish Minnesota as a refuge for those whose own state governments have sought to persecute and punish them for seeking to make and act on their own decisions about their pregnancies, their lives, their families, and their future.

The Reproductive Freedom Defense Act protects reproductive freedom for Minnesotans, and people across the country who need access to the full range of reproductive health care options, free from government interference.

Passing the Reproductive Freedom Defense Act amends existing laws, including those regarding medical privacy, licensure, extradition, and prosecutorial procedure to reflect the reality that some states consider reproductive health care a crime and Minnesota explicitly does not.

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 SF165 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