



663 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST  
SUITE 200  
SAINT PAUL, MN 55104

PHONE 651.789.2090

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:

I am writing on behalf of Gender Justice to support stronger hospital merger regulations that include explicit protections for reproductive freedom and gender-affirming health care. Gender Justice is a legal and policy advocacy organization dedicated to advancing gender equity through the law.

This is a critical moment for reproductive freedom in Minnesota. In the wake of the US Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, we must aggressively defend reproductive rights and health care access not only for our own citizens, but also for those seeking care and safe haven from other states whose lawmakers have refused to respect their rights and protect them in law.

LGBTQ people and particularly transgender people are being targeted for discrimination in state legislatures around the country. This year, policymakers have introduced 105 bills attempting to ban transgender youth from accessing gender-affirming health care, despite the fact that this care is in line with current medical best practices. These medical bans in some cases impose civil and/or criminal penalties for health care providers and parents who provide gender-affirming health care for youth.

It is imperative that SF1681 ensures specific evaluation of the impact on reproductive care, labor and birthing facilities, abortion, and gender-affirming care is required and that significant negative impacts on these services are not allowed. Any merger that jeopardizes protections for abortion and other reproductive health care and health care for transgender people should be rejected. We request that you add these protections to this legislation.

Sincerely,

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

Executive Director, Gender Justice