

HENNEPIN COUNTY

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

01/18/23

Senator Ron Latz
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3105
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Latz and Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for HF 1, which establishes the fundamental right to reproductive health.

As County Attorney, I am committed to defend the right to choose. Our office has joined Attorney General Keith Ellison, Ramsey County Attorney John Choi, and colleagues around the country, pledging to decline prosecutions of personal healthcare choices criminalized under laws that have already passed in some states. I have made it clear that I will decline to prosecute any cases regarding reproductive healthcare choices.

I support this legislation because it codifies the approach county attorneys across the state and nation have taken to protect, and respect, the decisions of those seeking reproductive healthcare.

As Hennepin County Attorney, I have a duty to protect the individual rights and safety of all residents. For the past half century, courts throughout the country have recognized the fundamental right to make decisions on one's own reproductive health. The U.S. Supreme Court, in deciding *Roe v. Wade*, determined that every individual has a right to privacy which is "broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." As you know, our nation's highest court recently reversed *Roe*. While abortion is legal and protected by our high court's interpretation of our state constitution, this legislation will strengthen this well recognized and hard won right.

I also support this legislation because it promotes public safety. As victim/survivor advocates know, access to safe abortions is a matter of safety for victim/survivors of intimate partner violence. When someone is forced to carry a pregnancy to term, they are often dependent on their abuser and are unable to seek safety. Reproductive freedom helps to prevent this type of coercion by preserving options for victim/survivors.

Thank you again for this opportunity to express my support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney