

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S HEALTH

WHEREAS, access to safe, affordable, and comprehensive reproductive health care services is a basic human right, and is vital to the overall physical and mental health of women, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals who can become pregnant; and

WHEREAS, every individual should have access to comprehensive reproductive health care throughout their lives, including screening for cancer and sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive services, abortion care, prenatal care, labor and delivery services, breastfeeding support, postpartum care, and menopausal care; and

WHEREAS, abortion is one of the safest medical procedures in the United States, as demonstrated by data, including from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, showing that abortion has over a 99% safety record; and

WHEREAS, every individual has a right to comprehensive, evidence-based information about the full range of reproductive health care options available to them, regardless of income, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, age, immigration status, criminal history, geographic circumstance, type of insurance, or insurance-coverage status; and

WHEREAS, like other medical procedures, the safety of abortion is furthered by evidence-based practices developed and supported by medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, an individual's bodily autonomy and freedom to make reproductive decisions is vital to their safety, well-being, economic opportunity, and ability to participate equally in society; and

WHEREAS, on January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a historic and landmark decision, ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the U.S. Constitution safeguards a woman's ability to make her own personal medical decisions about when or whether to have children; and

WHEREAS, that decision has allowed women to participate more fully in society, saved lives, and strengthened families and we must always guard against efforts to deliberately erode the availability and affordability of abortion and undermine the protections provided by *Roe v. Wade*; and

WHEREAS, in its 2016 *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* decision the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed a woman's constitutional right to access abortion; and

WHEREAS, the Hyde Amendment, passed by Congress on September 30, 1976, has impeded access to abortion care for low-income women enrolled in Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, additional laws that restrict insurance coverage of abortion create unjust obstacles to quality health care, and the impact of health inequities falls hardest on low-income women, women of color, immigrant and undocumented women, survivors of domestic violence, transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals, and young women; and

WHEREAS, an individual who wants to get an abortion, but is denied one is more likely to fall into poverty than one who can get an abortion; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina law currently imposes limitations on insurance coverage of abortion in the state Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, many North Carolinians—including state and federal employees, Peace Corps members, people who are incarcerated in federal prisons, Native Americans who utilize Indian Health Services, and members of the military—who qualify for insurance coverage from the federal government are subject to bans on insurance coverage of abortion; and

WHEREAS, all women, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals should have insurance coverage for comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion care, to ensure that their economic status or the source of their insurance coverage does not affect important health care decisions or access; and

WHEREAS, public health insurance should cover all of an individual's options when they are facing pregnancy, so that they are able to make a real decision about what is best for them and their family; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that funding of comprehensive reproductive health care be increased and that abortion be covered as part of comprehensive reproductive health care in all public insurance programs to ensure that services are accessible for individuals who are enrolled in such programs; and

WHEREAS, the Durham County Board of Commissioner's commitment to social justice in its condemnation of HB2 in April 2016, means a resolution in Durham County is aligned with its tradition of standing up for local control, progress, and social justice; and



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WHEREAS, the Durham County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution endorsing the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on September 11, 2017, which outlined women’s fundamental human rights, including women’s health and economic disparities that impact women; and

WHEREAS, individuals of reproductive age in Durham County who are Durham Public Schools employees (including teachers, support staff, and administrators); federal, state, city, and county employees; and who purchase insurance through the Affordable Care Act are subject to a ban on abortion coverage; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,865 Durham women of reproductive age enrolled in Medicaid are denied coverage for comprehensive pregnancy-related care that includes abortion care, because of bans on such coverage imposed by federal and state lawmakers;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT that the Durham County Board of Commissioners calls for the repeal of the federal Hyde Amendment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners calls upon President Trump and Governor Cooper to actively support these and all other measures to ensure and protect the rights of women, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals everywhere to have unhindered access to safe and comprehensive health care.

This the 9th day of April, 2018.

Wendy Jacobs, Chair

James A. Hill, Vice Chair

Heidi Carter

Brenda A. Howerton

Ellen W. Reckhow

