



Testimony in Support of SJR7
Joint Committee Meeting of the Senate and Assembly Legislative Operations Committee
Thursday, March 23, 2023

Chair Ohrenschall and Chair Gorelow, members of the Senate and Assembly Legislative Operations Committee, thank you for holding this hearing on SJR 7. This resolution, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro, will adopt protections for reproductive freedom into the state constitution. The bill includes protections for abortion care in addition to a person's right to obtain birth control, prenatal care, birthing care, postpartum care, vasectomy and tubal ligation, miscarriage management, and infertility care.

My name is Caroline Mello Roberson, and I'm the Southwest Regional Director for NARAL Pro-Choice America and lead staffer for our state chapter, NARAL Pro-Choice Nevada, registering our support for SJR7.

NARAL Pro-Choice Nevada is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to advancing reproductive freedom for all through legislative, political, and community organizing. NARAL has organizers in Nevada, allowing us to organize directly in the community. NARAL has been operating on the ground in Nevada since 2016, where we began with 900 members. Through door-to-door outreach, phone banking, online actions, and community events, we have recruited more than 48,000 NARAL members since that time and are growing every day.

Since the 2017 legislative session, NARAL Nevada, along with our partners at Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada, have led the charge to advance policies to protect reproductive freedom. In every session since 2017, the majority in this legislature, including folks from both political parties, have voted in favor of reproductive freedom policies. This includes the successful 2019 effort NARAL led to pass the Trust Nevada Women Act, which removed criminal penalties for abortion, and updated our informed consent law to remove medically unnecessary questions like asking a patient if they were married before providing care. It also marked the first time the legislature had taken up the issue of abortion rights in more than 40 years.

In 2019, Nevadans did not know what was about to come down in 2022 that would alter the abortion rights landscape all over America. The U.S. Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* last summer ended a nearly-50 year constitutionally protected right, and gave state lawmakers the green light to pass, and enforce cruel abortion bans. Because of this, the abortion access landscape has changed and will continue to do so as more states across the country race to ban care. Right now, millions of Americans live in 18 states that have abortion bans in place,

forcing them to travel to states like Nevada for care. This includes many states bordering Nevada—like Idaho, Utah, and Arizona—with bans on abortion. There are also further attacks on abortion access making their way through the courts, as well as attempts to federally ban abortion in Congress.

Reproductive freedom is in crisis like never before across the country and here in Nevada. While it is important to note that Nevada is one of the few places in the nation with voter approved, statutory abortion protections, it is so clear that we need better protections to continue safeguarding the rights of future generations. That is why we need permanent protections in our state constitution, which is what SJR7 proposes to do.

SJR7 protects many aspects of reproductive freedom, not solely abortion rights, because we know that it's not just our right to access abortion that is being attacked. Anti-abortion lawmakers and activists are also targeting our right to determine our futures through birth control, infertility care, and miscarriage management. Enough is enough. That is something we can all get behind.

Nevadans overwhelmingly support reproductive freedom, with more than 8 in 10 saying they support the freedom to decide if, when, and how to grow or start a family without politicians interference. According to polling we released today, conducted by Breakthrough campaigns, 4 in 5 voters want the government to stay out of the decisions around reproductive freedom—including 83% of Latino/a voters, 86% of Black voters, and 88% of Independent voters. Not only do Nevada voters want this constitutional amendment protecting their reproductive freedom, with 60% of folks committing to vote yes, but polling shows they are also more motivated to turn out to an election with this on the ballot.

Nevadans must be able to access the reproductive health care that meets their needs throughout their lives, free from political interference. Decisions about our health care—especially our reproductive health care—should always be between a person, their provider, and those they love and trust. This constitutional protection is making sure that Nevadans are protected from government overreach in our reproductive health care decisions and that patients and their providers are guaranteed privacy. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of SJR7 and let the people vote on protecting their fundamental reproductive freedom without delay. Thank you!